

Two Evenings, TWO YEARS APART.

BY VIRGINIA P. TOWNSEND.

I.

"Christine, will you go out on the lake this evening? It's a splendid night for a sail."

The young lady, thus interrogated, sat by one of the front chamber windows of a large and handsome country residence. Her feet rested on an ottoman, and she was surveying the rosettes which mounted a pair of daintily embroidered slippers, with a languid air and an absent, half dissatisfied expression.

At her brother's question she turned and looked out of the window, and the summer evening revealed its beauty and its glory to the eyes of Christine Jarvys.

The house was situated on an eminence which commanded a view of the country for miles around. The moon had just come over the distant mountains, and from her urn of gold was poured out that crystal river of light, whose waves overflowed the landscape, and lent a spiritual grace and beauty to every object which they touched. About a mile off, beyond the meadows, lay the lake—its silver seam of waters flashing between the green shores, and losing itself in a bend of the mountains. The winds shook out sweet perfumes from the garden beneath; the thick stars over head were blurred by no faintest film of cloud; and so, in its white flowing tunic of moonlight, the summer evening uncovered its face, and stood up before Christine Jarvys.

Her eyes, like harebells, did not brighten much in loving recognition of its beauty. There was a shadow still on the young and sweet face, which she turned to her brother. "I don't feel much like going out on the water this evening, Asa," she said, and the listless tones suited the shadows in her face. "Who is to go besides you?"

"Oh, nobody except Frank Reynolds and Ben Grant to manage the boat. I say, sis, you'd better go along, instead of staying here and moping through the evening all alone." And the young man threw his slight, graceful limbs into the chair opposite his sister.

"I think that I shall be able to stand it somehow," answered the young lady, with a resigned expression of tone and face which plainly indicated that she regarded martyrdom as her peculiar destiny, and intended to meet her fate with becoming fortitude.

Asa Jarvys leaned forward, rested one hand on his sister's knee, and looked in her face.

"What's gone wrong now, Christie, that you're down in the dumps like this? Come, don't act so, but brighten up, and tell a fellow what's to pay."

Thus adjured, the young lady condescended to explain the causes which had produced her present gloomy views of human nature, and the world in general.

"The truth is, Asa, you're a man, and wont understand anything about it; but my bonnet came home this afternoon, and it's a perfect fright—a great bunch of poppies on the outside, and purple mignonette scattered through the inside trimming—when purple is so unbecoming; it always made me look hideous."

Asa Jarvys was a generous, good-natured young man—moreover, he loved his pretty sister dearly—so he put on a deeply sympathetic voice and face, much as a father would over a decapitated plaster of Paris dog, which his child might hold up to him.

"Well, it's too bad about the bonnet, Christie, that's a fact."

"But that isn't all, Asa. My dressmaker has just sent me word that she forgot the blue trimmings for my dove-colored silk when she went to the city, and so I shant have it ready to wear to Judge Hamlin's to-morrow evening."

"The victim of a milliner and mantua-maker! On the whole, Christie, you are an amiable girl, but I don't suppose that the most exemplary of your sex could stand such a conjunction of trials and sufferings. A ruined bonnet and an unfinished dress! It's too much. I stand appalled before such an abyss of miseries!" and a loud, hearty laugh concluded, as was most fitting, the mock sympathy of Asa Jarvys's speech.

But to tell the truth, he commenced it with a benevolent intention of entering fully into his sister's feelings and disappointments. But his sense of the ludicrous was keen, and his relish of a joke intense, and the latter carried the day.

Christine Jarvys drew back, with an unusual display of dignity. "I see how it is, Asa; you're making fun of my troubles after all; I don't want any more of your pretended sympathy."

"Well now, sis, it is too bad, really. I'm just as sorry for the little girl as I can be:" leaning forward once more and seizing the small wrists. But as though his sister's cup of afflictions was not yet filled to the brim, a jet bracelet, exquisitely mounted with carved ivory, snapped under the young man's hand. Christine gave a loud shriek, as the beautiful, fragile toy fell to the floor, and scattered the carpet with snowy fragments of dainty workmanship.

This was too much. Christine Jarvys fell back in her chair and burst into tears.

Her brother felt this was no time for joking, and with real concern on his face he put his arm around his sister. "I'm so sorry, Christie: I wouldn't have done it for all the world, truly. Come now, kiss me and make up, and you shall have another bracelet, handsomer than this."

"I don't want another," sobbed the petted girl. "Uncle Rufus gave me that on my last birthday, and I wouldn't have had it broken for all the world. I know what your sympathy is good for, and that you are laughing at me all the time."

"Look up, and see if I am. Come, sis, don't pout any more. Forget all about your troubles, and go out and have a sail and a song with me: it's high time we were off."

"I can't go with you, Asa—don't wait for me;" hugging the luxury of her grief.

"Well, then, good bye; when I come back, two hours later, I hope I shall find a better natured little sister," said the young man, as he rose up, a little annoyed that his attempts to appease the girl met with no better success. He kissed her forehead, for her cheeks were hidden in her hands, and then he went out.

Christine Jarvys sat still in the moonlight, and listened for her brother's steps. She heard them go swiftly down the long stone walk, and pause at the front gate, while he talked with the gardener. She took her hands from her eyes and looked out, and the silence and beauty of the night reproved her. The better part of her nature rose up, and showed her that she had been unjust and irritable. Despite all the faults of her education, she had fine instinct, and a generous, exuberant nature. She sprang up and ran down stairs, and out into the garden. Her brother had gone some distance down the road, but her voice reached out after, and found him.

"Asa! Asa!"

He turned back, at once half suspecting the truth.

"Asa," and she put her soft arms about his neck, "I'm sorry I was so cross to you just now, but I was so fretted, you know. 'Tisn't any matter about the bracelet; and I've come down here to kiss you good bye for two hours."

"What! aren't you going with us? Run back and get your bonnet."

"I can't, Asa, dear. Mrs. Melvyn sent me a message that she would pass an hour with me this evening, and I promised to be at home. But I hope you'll have a nice time."

She put up a pair of lips that were like the June roses in the full blush of bloom on the veranda, and her brother bent down his handsome head and kissed them warmly.

"Good bye, Christie. Be a good girl, and I shall be back in a couple of hours."

And so they parted at the garden gate; and the last chapter of Asa and Christine Jarvys's life together was closed without sign or warning. Its pages had been made up of the pleasant years of their childhood and youth, and all the lines had been written in light and gladness. But in after years, those last words and that last kiss, were to the heart of Christine Jarvys like golden blossoms, covering the tendrils of memory, which took their deep root in that last hour of her brother's life.

Asa and Christine Jarvys were orphans. They had, however, been adopted by their father's brother and his wife. The gentleman was a wealthy banker in New York, and as he had no children of his own, he and his wife had lavished their affection on their nephew and niece.

No wealth had been spared—no luxury it could purchase forgotten in the training of the young orphan boy and girl. Their uncle and aunt made earthly idols of the children which had fallen to them, and they grew up with no faint idea of all the sorrow, and trial, and discipline, which are the heritage of the sons and daughters of men. The brother and sister were favorites with all who knew them. The boy, with his dark, thin, finely cut face and flashing eyes, in which spirit and mirth were forever at strife, was a perfect antithesis to Christine, whose face was the bequest of her mother. Looking on her, at rest, you would have thought of a lily, with its great snowy petals opened full to the sunlight. But the face of Christine Jarvys was not often at rest; it was full of quick change and response, which set bright carnations in the cheeks; and her eyes, like hare-

bells, kept smiles, as her brother's did laughter; and in light, and in shadow, fell over the soft oval profile the brown hair, whose rich tints were also the gift of the mother to the child, who could not remember her.

Asa had graduated with high honors at college. Christine, two years his junior, was accomplished after her age and social standard. But though her life of ease and luxury had weakened and warped her heart and soul, still the good seed waited in the warm soil for the early and latter rains, which should quicken them into life and blossoming.

Mr. and Mrs. Jarvys resided in the city; but as they grew older, their annual visits to watering places became irksome, and they at last purchased a handsome country house in a picturesque little town in the interior of the state, and thither the family repaired every May.

It was a beautiful spot, locked up in rare shrubberies, with gardens and groves; and as the master and mistress were extremely hospitable, their country home was frequently crowded with company from the city; and so the brother and sister sported and dreamed away the summer, in the midst of scenery that was a constant picture and poem to the head that could receive it.

Mr. and Mrs. Jarvys had been suddenly summoned from home on some business, at the time of which I write, and it chanced that the brother and sister were left alone, as the guests they were expecting did not arrive until a week later.

Christine Jarvys went slowly up to the house in the white moonlight. The shadow had gone off from her face, and it had now its look like the lily, with the sweetness and the dream upon it.

She quite forgot her spoiled bonnet, her unfinished dress, her broken bracelet. She gathered a few sprays of mignonette, and some carnations—for flowers flanked either side of the front walk—and then, after a long pause on the front steps, in which she did true and loving reverence to the night, she went into the parlor. A gentleman rose up from the sofa, and informed her that he brought her a message from Mrs. Melvyn. The lady had been surprised that evening by the unexpected advent of her parents, and would not be able to fulfil her engagement with Miss Jarvys.

The bright eyes of the young heiress searched the speaker's face as he delivered his message. It was a fine one, with a thin delicacy of outline, and a thoughtful, earnest expression, which

made you feel at once you were in the presence of a man of force and cultivation.

The eyes had a steady brightness, wholly unlike the flash and change of Asa's; and the lips had a smile not frequent nor mirthful, but full of grave sweetness, which matched the eyes.

"Will you take a seat, sir?" said Christine, as the gentleman concluded his errand.

"Thank you. I fear I shall detain you," and the young man took his hat, evidently supposing the invitation merely conventional.

"Oh, no. I am quite alone, as my brother has gone out on the lake for an hour or two."

The gentleman looked in the girl's face. It was a steady, searching gaze, yet by no means intrusive.

He was satisfied that her invitation was a sincere one. He resumed his seat.

"You are a friend of Mrs. Melvyn's, I conclude?" asked Christine.

My older brother, who is dead, was a friend and classmate of her husband's. I am, for the next six months, the tutor of her two sons."

Somehow the better instincts of the flattered heiress, recognized the true manliness of her guest, in the brief, candid answer. There was no question but the tutor was a gentleman, after the best, truest meaning of the word; a meaning that comprehends certain indigenous qualities of heart and soul, which no social grafting can confer.

Christine smiled the bright, frank smile, which filled her face with light and sweetness. "Well, I am a woman you know, and have my legacy of curiosity, but I will not exercise the prerogative of my sex, farther than to ask you one question more. What is your name?"

"Latimer Winthrop. It is known neither in camps nor counsels, neither in the world of letters nor on Wall St.; it is famous nowhere; and in the wide world, its best merit is, I believe, that it is precious to a very few hearts."

"You are a very strange man," thought Christine Jarrys. Her guest smiled quietly to himself. "Did he *guess* what I was thinking!" wondered Christine.

After this, she could not tell how they slipped off into an animated conversation on a thousand different matters. Christine was glad enough to find a man who led her out of herself, and whose speech had some nerve and force in it; who never availed himself of an opportunity to turn a pretty compliment to herself; but who stimulated her own thoughts, who was full of suggestion and appreciation of men, books, and the world in general.

At last, in a pause of the conversation, they heard a sudden gasp, and cry of the wind outside.

"Dear me! what can it mean!" said Christine, and she and her guest rose, and hurried to the window.

It was a strange sight, the great cloud, coming up from the east, and wrapping in its black garments the golden "stream of stars," and the grace, and beauty of the night, vanished like the vision of a dream before it.

"Oh, how dreadful!" exclaimed Christine, and she shuddered, standing by the tutor of the young Melvyns.

"That depends upon the eyes with which we look at it," said the young man, with his grave, sweet smile, and it was evident that to his eyes the cloud had no "dreadful" voice or language.

This thought came into Christine Jarrys's mind, as she stood by the window. It was followed by another, which struck all the color from her cheeks. "Oh, what will become of Asa, if the wind should overtake him?"

"Does he know how to manage the boat," asked Mr. Winthrop, with a good deal of interest.

"Not in a storm; but Ben Grant, who has charge of the boat, is an old sailor—still, I can't help feeling alarmed."

"I think there is no cause for solicitude, and then, there is no thought to calm our fears like the blessed one, that God is over us in all danger." Christine's eyes, like harebells, lifted to her guest's, grew full of a strange awe and wonder. Truly this man was unlike any she had ever met.

Then the storm broke, with a wild cry. The great branches rocked and wrenched under it. It thundered back and forth, and fairly shook the foundations of the great house, where Christine sat with the young tutor, her heart filled with a great fear for her brother.

But the storm did not last long. Swift as the wind arose, it fell. The black wings of the cloud dropped slowly away; and there was a great calm. The stars looked out from a mist thinner than the film of bridal laces.

"It is time Asa was here!" exclaimed Christine.

At that moment the front gate opened sharply. Swift steps pelted the stones, and a moment later, a youth of about sixteen burst into the parlor. His coarse, yellow hair, hung in dragged locks about his white face; his clothes were dripping, and he stammered out in an agony of fright and terror, "The boat's

gone down! The wind upset her! Wont somebody go to their help?"

If you had heard poor Christine's shriek then! Mr. Winthrop caught her, or she would have fallen; but there was no time to be lost; he laid the girl on the sofa; and he did not know that his lips uttered the prayer which was in his heart, and that Christine heard it, "God have mercy upon you!"

Then, the young man rushed out of the room; but his hostess sprang up, and swift as a deer met him at the front door; "Oh, you will save my brother!" she cried, with lips like those out of which never came word nor sound.

"God be witness that I shall try!" and he was gone, and the boy followed him.

Mr. Winthrop was a fine swimmer; and though the lake was nearly a mile from the residence of Mr. Jarvys, he was only a few minutes in reaching the shore; for his feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground on his way.

He paused once only, to ask the boy, who had followed but could not keep up with him, a few necessary questions. He ascertained that he was the son of the fisherman, Benjamin Grant. His father had been suddenly summoned from home that evening, and the two young men had persuaded him to go out on the lake with the sail-boat, which he was not accustomed to managing alone.

They would, however, have been safe enough, if it had not been for the sudden "squall of wind" which overtook them before they could reach the shore, and in attempting to turn the boat around, she upset.

The boy swam to shore, and hurried to Mr. Jarvys's for help, as that gentleman's house was nearest to the lake. He fancied both of the young men could keep their "heads above water" until assistance could be procured. And with a prayer that it might be so, Latimer Winthrop rushed towards the shore at the point the boy indicated.

The moon sailed out from the frayed edges of the clouds, and looked down upon the fretted waters. In the distance the young man thought he discerned a head sinking and rising in the waters; he plunged in, and was not long in reaching it; and with great difficulty conveyed the nearly drowned man to the shore.

Benjamin Grant had just arrived there. The honest-hearted old man was full of alarm and grief at what had occurred. He looked eagerly in the white, unconscious face which Mr. Winthrop laid down on the sands.

"It's Mr. Raymond!" he said.

And where was Christine's brother? The small sail-boat was drifting to and fro on the waves, like great silver wings blossoming out of the dark waters. The two men swam out to it, after consigning Mr. Raymond to the care of Benjamin Grant's son.

By this time all traces of that wild cloud was wiped off from the face of the sky. The stars and the moon looked down bright and calm on the white faces of the men. They searched for an hour in silence; and then they found him! They drew him up tenderly and laid him in the boat, and as they thought of his sister at home, both the young man and the old one felt that they would gladly lay down their own lives, if they could call the breath back to that beautiful clay.

The moonlight fell sweetly on the young dead face, which had in it no traces of pain or struggle, and shone over the sweet clustering hair, which had so lately crowned the proud, restless head. No wonder the strong men wept as they laid it down tenderly in the boat.

And Christine?

For two slow, slow hours, that seemed longer than all the rest of her life, she had watched and waited. The servants had all gone out, with the exception of a chambermaid, who tried to comfort her mistress, as she sometimes sank down into stolid despair, and then rose up and wrung her hands, and wandered through the rooms, her wild, white face full of agony.

At last her strained ear caught the muffled sound of footsteps outside. They were bringing their burden up the walk. "Carry him in by the side door, and I will go up and try to break the truth to her," said Mr. Winthrop, in a low voice, to the men. But at that moment, a slight figure plunged down the steps and rushed towards the lifeless form. The light of the moon fell brightly on the dead face. Christine staggered back.

"Is he drowned?" she said, looking up in so pitiful a way that the men could not speak, but she looked in each face, and read her answer there; and then, Christine lay on the ground as unconscious as her brother.

Latimer Winthrop lifted the girl and carried her into the house. He bathed her temples, and assisted the frightened chambermaid to restore her to consciousness; yet he dreaded the time when she should open her eyes; and looking on her as she lay in her fair, sweet beauty before him, he said; stroking the bright hair, "Poor little crushed lily! I wish that

I could help you, for the first great storm has come down on your life, and how can you meet it—you for whom it always has been sunshine, and soft winds." But the youth in Christine's veins triumphed in a little while, and she opened her eyes.

The young man saw that she knew all. She was off from the lounge where she lay, in a moment, and when he would have held her back, she struck aside his arm, and rushing out of the room, seemed led by some instinct to the one where her brother lay.

She knelt down by him,—with her shaking fingers she put away the clustering hair from the broad, white brow.

"Look up at me; speak to me, darling," she moaned. "You said you'd come back to me in an hour or two, when you kissed me at the garden gate. Your little sister can't live without you, Asa, for she loved you better than her own life! I can't live without you, darling brother! I *must* have you back again. I *must* hear your voice calling sweetly after me 'Christie! Christie!' as it used to. I can't believe it's silent forever! Oh, Asa, my heart will break!—my heart will break! Open your eyes and smile at me once more," and she put down her warm cheek to the cold white one, and shuddered as the chill went through her.

She looked up, and Mr. Winthrop was standing by her side. "Can't you help me?" she said, as a lost, frightened child that had sobbed itself into exhaustion, would have said it.

"My child," answered the young tutor, in a voice husky and broken, "it is God only who can help you now."

And Christine's broken heart went out, for the first time, with a new call and yearning after Him, whom in her happiness she had scarcely remembered, but who, she felt in the hour of her great sorrow, from which all human aid shrank appalled and unavailing, could alone give her help or healing.

"God have pity upon me!" she sobbed, and then the tears washed in great jets over her face, and Mr. Winthrop led her faint steps from the room. Poor Christine!

All that night he did not leave her; and oh, what sweet, and strong, and blessed words he said to her,—words that fell in healing balsams on her spirits,—words of faith, and trust, and submission, and for the first time, Christine Jarvys's eyes were opened, and she saw something of the Great Eternal Love whose sea had flowed all about her life, and from the lost

earthly love her heart went, as so many have done, to the heavenly.

And when the first gray flakes of dawn were seen in the east, Christine Jarvys fell asleep, strengthened and comforted. The next day a telegram brought back Mr. and Mrs. Jarvys to their broken household. There was no one to behold the meeting of the uncle and aunt with the nephew, who had been the pride and the joy of their hearts.

He lay there, so life-like, with something of the old smile coming back to his white lips; but—alas for thy beauty laid low in the morning, Asa Jarvys!

II.

Two years have passed. It was once more the time of the blossoming of roses, and Christine Jarvys came out of the front door of her country home, and looked once more upon the fair landscape, in its shining wrappers of moonlight. The bright seam of waters flashed in the distance; the road lay, like a soiled yellow fringe on the dark green edge of the meadows, and far-off, stood the great, silent hills, and the robe of the summer was woven thick and beautiful upon them.

Christine came out from the shadows of the vines which covered the veranda, and leaned against one of the pillars, and the moonlight fell full upon her face.

Somehow, those two years had changed it, but the change was that which comes not of years, but of character. Something more thoughtful, more spiritual, had come to the sweet face. The memory of *that* night came back to Christine Jarvys as she gazed. "It was just such an evening as this, and right in that white belt of moonlight by the gate you kissed me for the last time—oh, Asa!" she murmured.

"Miss Christine!" The girl started, for the speaker had entered the grounds by the side gate, and come round to the front steps so lightly, that she had not heard him. Her face flushed into glad surprise, as she gave the speaker her hand, with the cordiality of a long friendship.

"I am glad to see you back once more, Mr. Winthrop."

"Thank you. The three months since I left have seemed a long time to me, though they've been filled to the brim with hard study. I've finished my profession, and run up to get your and the Melvyns congratulations?"

"You would have had mine without the asking."

"That is more than I expected. It is a night wonderful for beauty, Miss Christine."

"Wonderful for beauty!" But there was something in the lady's sweet voice which made one think of the tolling of bells. Latimer Winthrop glanced swiftly in her face, and he knew what night her memory clasped with this one.

"I don't know what I should have done without you then," said the young girl, drawing a little nearer to the gentleman, as the old memories surged over her.

"It was not I, Miss Christine, it was God that helped you."

"I never could have borne it otherwise. I wonder if I needed that terrible lesson—if without it my life would always have gone on in the old channels of frivolity, and self-seeking, with no real aim, or purpose, or hope!"

Looking on the girl as she spoke, a grave, sweet smile went over the face of Latimer Winthrop, but something flickered along the smile, and up into his eyes, which Christine did not see. He drew nearer—he took her small hand in his own—

"Christine," and the speaker's voice had lost a little of its steady poise—"I must speak what I have to say in few words. That sweet ideal of womanhood which my heart has so long lingered after has been revealed to me. I do not believe that I should ever have found it if it had not been for that night two years ago.

"Christine, you are rich, and I am poor. I have nothing to offer you but a love that has twined itself so closely around the roots of my life, that it seems as though it would be death to tear it away.

"Yet, it would not be, because I trust in God, and He will give me strength to receive your answer, whatever it may be.

"The Melvyns have told you all about me that there is to tell. A young lawyer, struggling up in life, can have little to offer a woman in your position, particularly when his dearest friends have all gone to sleep before him, and he has nothing but his own brave heart, and his faith in God, to help him. Christine, you know the rest. If your answer must be 'No,' do not let it come from your lips, only take the hand which I hold here, away."

The little trembling hand lay still in his own, and Latimer Winthrop had his answer. Half an hour later, walking up and down the path swathed in moonlight, he said to her—

"But, your uncle and aunt, Christine!

You know what value they place on what I cannot give you—wealth and position."

The eyes, like harebells, of Christine Jarvys, made answer with her lips—

"They will value my heart more than these, when I tell them it is yours, Latimer."

And so the sorrow and the joy of the two June evenings were blended together in the heart of Christine Jarvys, and ever afterwards they lent a tender sacredness and significance each to the other.

down the hill—"Come out to us, and join in our rejoicing."

Turning once more to a tiny crib, I felt sure that the wee form nestling there was safely bound in gentler arms than mine—the feverish restlessness had yielded to loving ease, and rest, calm and refreshing, as an infant's angel-guarded slumber alone could bring, was restoring our drooping Lily to its wonted loveliness. My care was unneeded now, and I might indulge myself in an out-of-door ramble among the singing birds and clover-blossoms. So, with much of the old-time gladness in my heart, I bounded down the steps to the green sward, that, yielding lightly to my tread, sent the fragrance of a thousand flowers upwards, bathing my senses in an atmosphere of sweetest odors.

Slowly, and at peace, I walked, flowers and shadows mingling in my path—anon looking up into the great apple-trees, where the promises of the golden autumn were playing bo-peep with the leaves, or stooping to pluck the golden dandelions, that rested like smiles on the face of the gay meadow land.

Musing in dreamy forgetfulness, fancy led me unconsciously back to the years of childhood, when those *two*—companions of all my hours—sharers of every joy, walked by my side, joyous and free—twin of my life, and "twin of my spirit."

The past came back to me with its treasures of careless joy, and, as of old, my fingers were busy weaving light curls of the long, slender stems I had plucked. As one, of more than usual symmetry and grace, hung trembling from my hand, I turned unconsciously, to place it among the more beauteous ones of the fair young head at my side. But, as the call for "Minnie" fell from my lips, the sweet vision fled from my heart, and back, back in a full tide of agony, came the consciousness that they no longer frolicked by my side, but, hand in hand beside the river of life, were wandering, feasting their artist-souls on lovelier scenes than those of earth, and decking each other's brows with fair garlands, woven by spirit-hands, in the Paradise of our Father.

Throwing myself upon the grass, I yielded for awhile to the overpowering grief. But, as my heart grew lighter, I could look with greater calmness down the years to the time of our last sad parting.

How Minnie's words echo in my heart yet, as, standing in the little room where so many happy hours had been spent, bright drops chasing each other rapidly down her cheeks, she said—

Vision of a Day and a Night.

BY IRENE IRIS.

The long, weary day, was but little more than half spent, as I stood leaning my head listlessly against the open doorway, and looking across the orchard-slope to the "way beyond," where the tall forest trees rose to meet the sky, and the sky bent to rest tenderly in blessing, on their ancient heads.

Voices sighed in the summer breeze, trilled from the tiny throat of some forest warbler, whispered 'mong the leaves through the apple-boughs, and shouted from the breast of the meadow brook, that came bounding merrily

"These sad, sad partings!—when will they cease? But, you sisters, even in your wanderings among strangers, will never be alone. Clinging to each other's love, you will scarcely realize the rough paths and jarring discords of this weary life we are entering upon. But how alone—how all alone I am! An orphan, poor and friendless!"

"Oh, no—not friendless, Minnie dear! We will write to you very often, and *if we all live*, sometime shall we meet again."

So we parted. Minnie bound for the sunny South—land of the mistletoe and orange tree, of which her young spirit had so long and so brightly dreamed. In the wilds of the far-off western land we sisters found a home, where, in the midst of active labor for others' weal, two years passed rapidly and *not unblest* away.

But there came a change, sudden and chilling as the first dismal storm of the dark November night. It was a chill winter's morning, and up a long flight of stairs, alone I wandered, to kneel beside the cold form of my sister. In the night time the angels had come, and borne her very silently away, and this, *this* was all they had left to me. As I knelt to gaze upon the beautiful features that, for the first time, refused their offering of loving smiles, the sun stole through the frosty window, and, with its first morning beam, shone upon the marble brow. But there was no joy in the sunlight to *me*. How it seemed to mock my grief, and taunt me with my crushing despair. Away down in the innermost depths of my soul, some hoarse, sepulchral voice whispered ever—"dead!" and, in a low moan, the word broke from my unsealed lips. Then, with startling clearness, through the chill air, pealed from the village steeple the death knell, repeating in slow, solemn tones, the mournful words—"dead—dead!"

God forgive me for the weak sinfulness of that hour. I had deemed my affections fixed on a rock firmer than that which a single stroke of the death-angel could destroy. But, alas for this dread presence, there was no faith to lighten the gloom! Under the withered hopes in my heart, I could yet see no precious gems of holier living.

But, why tarry over the weary days and nights? The years sped on, and scattered as they passed some healing drops over the bruised spirit.

Minnie and I had never met again, though letters were exchanged frequently, and sympathy for each other's sorrow glowed as warmly within our breasts, and breathed as fondly in

the white-winged messengers which passed between us, as it could have done in the spoken word, or gentle clasp of the hand.

But life was not all dark. A new love sprung up in my heart, and a manly voice called me by the blessed name of wife. Loving, and to be loved, I stood by *his* side in our quiet home, once more at rest.

One bright spring morning, ere the sun had kissed the dew from the jewelled earth, my husband placed in my hand a letter, bearing its superscription in the well-known autograph of my early friend. Within it was a card, and on it *her* name, beneath *another*—a stranger name to me—and I knew that Minnie walked the earth-paths no longer alone.

"I am coming to you, Agnes," thus the letter ran—"and, ere the summer voices shall have ceased, or autumn wakes her solemn minstrelsy, I shall be with you. Then, safely ensconced in your lovely home, we will talk of the past, with its departed joys—of the present, with its exceeding gladness, and, perchance may awaken again the old aspirations which have slumbered in our hearts only to give place to those brighter, purer, holier. There will be one missing in our group; but we mourn for her no longer. It is but a moment till we shall meet on the far shore of the River of Life; and we *now* know she is not so far away as at first she seemed. Of my noble husband, I will speak to you when I come. Till we meet, then, farewell."

Seating myself with my portfolio, thus I wrote:—

"Dearest Minnie, your letter promises too much joy to be real, and I read it again and again, to assure myself it is not all a dream. But, here before me, inscribed in your own hand, are the cherished words—'I am coming to see you once more.' Then hasten to my side, and let there be no dark disappointment to crown this joyous anticipation."

The weeks of spring passed swiftly away. Summer came, with its thousand joys, and each day found me waiting, waiting still for the advent of the loved one. Each evening the little vase *she* had given me, was filled with choicest flowers, and placed in the little room consecrated to her use. Books—her favorites in the olden time—were arranged upon the table; and pictures, that she and the departed one had painted, side by side, were hung upon the wall; but, still she came not. "Autumn woke her solemn minstrelsy," and I learned that though "we may appoint, God will direct our steps." With slow and mourn-

ful tread, the winter walked the earth, and shrouded each departed joy for the tomb. But ere its chilling winds had half passed away, there came another message to our home, bearing tidings of hearts rudely sundered, and hearthstones desolate. Thus it read:—

“Our old playmate, Minnie, has gone to dwell among the angels. But, why need I tell you? Long since you have heard of her months of suffering, and have felt it unkind to weep at the change, to her so blest. With a mother’s yearning love, she clasps her babe to her heart, in that brighter world where suffering can never enter, thanking the Infinite Father that the sweet flower blooming on earth has been transplanted to angel-bowers in Heaven.”

I understood all now, and, though my heart sunk within me at this great trial, I could not wish to call her back. In *God’s* time, we may meet again.

While memory had thus been unprofitably toying, with the strange incidents that lay clustered under the shadowy banks of my life, the sun had stolen round, and now cast the shadows of the great tree far to the eastward, and an undefined murmur in the air warned me that the day was passing, and that already more than the allotted hour had been spent. So, rising, I walked with hurried steps back to the nursery, and resumed the burden of care I had lain aside, feeling sadly conscious that it was none the lighter *now*. Some evil influence had forced back the springs of *true* and *holy* living, and there were now no gems of happiness, sparkling on the ceaseless current of my life.

—

Lightly and tenderly fell the moonbeams across the threshold through the open door. Gracefully the shimmering shadows of the great tree without climbed the wall, or stretched themselves along the carpet to my very feet, and even a few trembling branches, in shadow climbed upwards, as if to kiss the tiny foot that temptingly peeped from under the snowy robe in my lap.

Alternately I glanced at the wee form nestling so lovingly in my arms, and at the great, golden-sweet apple-tree, which stood bathed in mellow light, and sparkling with her brightest jewels. Beyond, lay the green meadow-land of the orchard, with its portly trees rising mystical and grand beneath the stars, while the velvet turf at their feet seemed another star-land, so brightly did the moonlight gild the tops of the golden dandelions, gemming the landscape.

There was music in the stars and the moonbeams, the great trees, and the shadows, and, in harmony therewith, there floated out upon the evening breeze the sweet tones of my husband’s flute.

I *should* have been happy, but a strange restlessness and vague longing for something unattained, looking into the past, and on to the dim and misty future, had taken deep possession of my soul. It had been a day of toil and perplexity, and my thoughts had taken an unprofitable channel; so that, when the hour for quiet meditation and sweet repose had come, I found myself unfitted to receive its holy benediction. I knew the evil of this despondency, for often had I been forced to struggle against it—God knows how fearfully sometimes. So to-night I tried to *force* my thoughts into brighter paths, and my heart into holier spheres; but ever would the spirit ask, unwisely—“Why were the former days better than these?” Better than these! Were not the love of my husband, the blessing of our child, the joys of our quiet home, far richer than any my clouded childhood could boast? Yes, surely. And, as the answer sunk deep into my heart, a silent thanksgiving ascended to the Infinite Father for the fount of joy which gladdened my life, when, with the early spring flowers, a sweet babe came to our cottage home, warming my heart, for the first time, with a mother’s love. Then I had said—this is joy enough; this flood of light will keep out the darkness. But even now, just as the radiant summer time had come to gladden our home and hearts, I was beginning to weary of the care which kept me so much in the nursery, and away from my favorite books, and old dream-life. Even the great and absorbing love could not *always* chase the shadows from my heart.

At length, the baby-form was laid snugly away in its tiny crib, and I returned to my low chair, and the dark presence that hovered o’er it. Presently, a kindly voice from the library asked—

“Can you not sing awhile, with my flute, dear wife?”

A moment only I hesitated, and then replied—

“Oh, I am so weary, my husband, and your flute is far sweeter always, without my voice—wait till some other time.”

The tempter had conquered again, and I had repelled the influence which might have brought my spirit out of the darkness, into the sunlight of peace.

The sweet tones came and went—floated out into the moonlight, like the mellow ripples of a tiny stream, or into my room, where I sat motionless, with my head resting upon my hand, like the voice of a pitying spirit, reproaching me with the words—"Thou mightest have been comforted."

Steadily I gazed out into the night, till my thoughts grew dismal, and I said—"Why are we thus separated? They, permitted to drink at the fount of Infinite love and truth, while I am left to grope on 'mid the darkness, with no fountain near, at which I can quench this insatiable longing." Like one under the compelling influence of some power of darkness, conscious of the danger, yet unable to extricate myself from it, I shuddered, closed my eyes to the light, and yielded to the spell that bound me. Gradually, I grew calmer, and a voice, in Æolian sweetness, breathed my name.

Opening my eyes, I looked out again upon the green meadow-land. Away up the hilly slope, on its very summit, appeared two forms of exceeding loveliness. I did not shudder now, though I knew my gentle sister was there, looking at me, as of old she looked, when we walked hand in hand, up the years of childhood and youth together—herself yet glorious now in the transparent beauty of true spirit-life.

Half of sorrow, yet full of love, was the gaze bent upon me, while peace, quiet and holy peace, mirrored itself upon her radiant brow.

Why does she not come to me? I thought, as, rising, I passed through the open door, and wended my way thitherward. Gaining the summit of the hill, joy inexpressible for one moment flooded my soul.

Minnie, the departed, bore in her arms the sweet babe who had so soon followed her to the land of the blest, and, at her side, my gentle sister—the loved, the lost—kneeling, toyed lovingly with the tiny hand, or, with a wreath of fair flowers, crowned the baby brow.

I know not what influence restrained me, but I could not approach the group. Yet was there nothing reproachful in the gaze of those mild blue eyes, bent upon me, so full of yearning tenderness and love.

No word of welcome was spoken, but the look was more eloquent than words. Deep into my inmost soul, the gaze of that spirit-sister penetrated. Lovingly and tenderly did the pure and earnest faith, enshrouding her like a halo of glory, seek to dispel the gloom that bound me in fetters of darkness.

Harsh and dissonant was my voice, as I asked, reproachfully—

"Do you never, in your new and radiant home, pine for a reunion with those who once shed sunshine and gladness around your earthly life?"

Instantly raising her eyes to mine, Minnie breathed, in sweetest tones—

"There is no love like that which I bear my husband and child. But *his* work on earth is not yet done. While he cheerfully labors on, to fill out the mission appointed him by the loving Father, we but tarry a moment here, to await his coming to the better land."

Her sweet voice ceased its utterance. A strange and beautiful light encircled the group, and penetrated to the very depths of my soul.

"No love like that which I bear my husband and child," I repeated earnestly and solemnly.

"And no life so blessed as that of calm resignation to the Divine will, in laboring to perform cheerfully the work He has appointed unto us to do, or bear," answered the spirit-voice again.

A bright light flashed into my understanding—a true and abiding love into my heart. Then, turning, I bent my steps silently and thoughtfully homeward.

A kiss was pressed upon my brow, and a noble face looked love to mine, as a manly voice exclaimed—

"Why, Agnes!—sitting here dreaming in the moonlight yet? I had thought you gone to rest long ago, and have been playing my flute this hour, to give you pleasant dreams."

"I have been sleeping here, dear husband, and happy visions have I had—thanks to your music, perhaps."

"No love like that which I bear my husband and child," whispered a voice within; "and no life so blessed as that of calm resignation to the Divine will."

How, in that moment of joy, as I threw my arms around my husband's neck, and returned his loving embrace, did I long to tell him all—all of the dark temptation of my life. But some influence, unseen and gentle, restrained me. Going to my little stand, where the lamp burned dimly, I opened my Bible. First of the glowing truths of the Holy Word, there met my eye—"Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still."

It was enough! I closed the book, breathing a silent and heartfelt prayer to the kind Parent, whose arm had been around me, and who had borne me so lovingly and tenderly

out of the darkness into the glorious light of day.

Summers have come and gone, laden with their rich blessings—new flowers have bloomed upon our household tree; but, though the tempter has haunted my heart many times, strength not my own has been my help, and never have I been left to struggle alone.

I have learned, in these years of loving care and toil, that God knows what is best for me; and, this bright June afternoon, as I walk over the meadow land, under the old apple-trees again, my eldest-born dancing, like a fairy thing of life and joy at my side—weaving light curls, to deck her fair young brow, the blest assurance comes, like a ray of sunlight to my heart—"There is no life so blest as that of *calm resignation to the Divine will.*"

had heard. It was first made in France, as was the no less popular *carte de visite*, for which there is now such an extraordinary demand throughout the country. The album varies in size and capacity, from a small duodecimo, holding twelve pictures, to a magnificent quarto, designed for the reception of from two to four hundred, and in price, from seventy-five cents to thirty dollars.

Foremost in the business of producing these elegant novelties, is the firm of J. B. Lippincott & Co., of Philadelphia, who manufacture an article undoubtedly superior to anything that is made. Though but a few months have elapsed since the first one came out of their extensive binderies, they now have between ten and fifteen thousand dollars invested in this branch alone, which gives employment to more than one hundred and fifty hands. From the beginning, they have not been able to keep pace with the demand. Recently, in looking through this part of their establishment, we were interested in noting the exceeding care with which every portion of the work is done. The material is of the very best quality, and all the parts are adapted to each other with an exactness that not only gives the most perfect symmetry, but also the greatest possible strength. In all that appertained to the work, we noted a fidelity to excellence that explained the reason why their Albums were regarded by the trade as superior to all others.

The introduction of the Photographic Album, which is rapidly finding its way into every household, has given a surprising stimulus to the photographic art, which is at present chiefly confined to the production of the *carte de visite*. Besides portraits of friends and distinguished personages, pictures and works of art are now made in this style, and in the albums of our young lady friends are seen copies of rare statuary, pictures from the old masters, and the choicest gems of modern art. A wonderful educator of the taste is this new fashion going to be. For twenty-five cents each, perfect copies, sun-painted, of costly pictures, engravings, or marbles, may be obtained, and the poorest, as well as the richest, enjoy the fair and beautiful.

PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS.

The newest and most popular thing under the sun is the Photograph Album, whereof, a year ago, scarcely one in a thousand, even in our largest cities,

The Dark Hour.

A FRAGMENT.

BY NINA H.

Then from the little porch Hester Grey stepped out into the street; the white country road winding by grassy lanes and fields, and occasional farm-houses. The only dwelling of any pretension in that neighborhood rose from the summit of a hill near by. From its windows lights shone cheerily, and Hester had just lingered in the shadow of the vine-leaves, until two of its occupants should pass; Roland Leigh and his wife—the Helen of other days.

The night was delicious and spring-like; the skies mottled with billows of fleecy clouds, and silvered wondrously by the moon as she glided now and then from out them. Hester walked alone and fearlessly the familiar paths she had trodden a thousand times; only the burden of unrest, which had of late oppressed her sleeping and waking, grew intolerable in this fragrant, sighing air.

Through the soft clouded moonlight the two figures moved on before her; the slender, womanly shape leaning so closely to the side of the other, strong and firmly knit, bending his face towards hers, watching and tender. On they passed together—the united lives; how satisfying, how inexpressibly rich must such an union be! Why of all others was she chosen to walk alone, and Helen, upon whom life had ever smiled, elected, and crowned with the highest gift to womanhood?

Patience, oh, weary woman, treading your lonely way! Upon you, too, the night smiles through its dews and silence, and it repeats for you the same lesson which myriad sore and wounded spirits have read. Love watches over you. It may not beam from human eyes,

or speak with the voice of human passion; but it writes itself in the heart of the way-side blossom, and is never wholly silent in the immortal soul.

Much is said and written of earthly sorrow, and for the sorrowing; but we believe any amount of affliction to be endurable, which does not turn to bitterness within. For all mourners we pray “God help them,” but especially for the class who experience such darkness. This bitterness, which no religion can aid, (for there can be no bitterness in a cross so lightened) is terrible beyond expression. The soul can be likened only to a midnight sea, broken into angry billows of storm. Happy the mariner who shall at length perceive through the dread tempest the Divine hand raised to still its tumult, and hear the voice whose echo still charms the ear of time, saying, “I am near thee, on the right hand and on the left, be not afraid!”

No emotion is strong enough to endure forever; in God's good time sorrow shall pass away, if we are but *patient*. Lay by those dead hopes, which no resurrection angel shall waken to beautiful life again. Were they the May blossoms early and fragrant of a morning dream? or, like sunset brightness, shutting over a long and cloudy day? Still, I repeat, hide them from your sight, and believe that upon the rough clods shall yet awaken the fair buds of a purer and better faith.

We have much confidence in the cheerful philosophy of a recent charming writer, the “Country Parson,” whose congregation is so extensive even upon these shores; and he asserts, with undoubted truth, that happiness and goodness are very closely allied. Health of body and soul; how rare and deep a well-spring of peace is touched by these words. But for many reasons, for which we are in

part responsible, few are so fortunate as to be always "walking in the light." To the mass, life is a perpetual struggle. To reconcile the inner world of thought and emotion, the high ideal of the soul with that external sphere over whose events we have so little control; to shape existence into a form it may wear unblushing to eternity, what wonder that with tears of weakness we so often pause by the way. Step by step we rise towards the heavenly hills, round by round of the celestial ladder is passed, but we fail to see the skies opening, and angels of comfort ascending and descending before us.

In this one woman's soul, the type of myriads, there has for months been going on a convulsive struggle with all the evil powers of her nature, until to her diseased and distorted vision everything in earth and heaven appears distorted. The crisis to which every true life must sooner or later come, her own had already reached, and upon the balance of this scale depends an endless future of woe or bliss, whose breadth and height she cannot fathom, no, nor the angels, but the Father only.

The elements of a true and noble nature are hers; strength of will and steadiness of purpose, combined with the delicacy of genuine refinement. But the burden of needs and aspirations, the sudden consciousness of all that she is capable of bearing and suffering, has for the time overwhelmed her. The power for good and evil she carries within herself is fearful, as she pauses to gather at a glance the vast space around her, the starry skies widening on—still on, the shadowed and silvered earth she treads; mysterious and solemn, she seems but an atom in the infinite sea; swept into being without her own volition; to be borne from it unwarned, and bearing through it a weight which is intolerable, but which she dares not throw aside.

Poor Hester Grey! there is but one source of comfort and relief for you and us all, when the dark hour closes round us, and we sink in lonely suffering. The remedy, the active labor which shall lead thought away from *self*, and by slow degrees substitute a healthful interest in the world around, must be your own discovery; and when once the clue is gained, though days and weeks and years elapse ere the cure is perfected, it shall bless you at last. As unerring as the renewal of life in the stern and frozen earth, is the revival of hope and faith in the soul which has been led through this horror of darkness, (no matter how long or

deep) into the higher regions of unwavering trust.

Sweeter than the unclouded sunshine is this awaking to a day through which the spring airs blow, and the glad birds sing, when we had thought never again to feel or hear them! Then, when duty becomes transformed to joy, we begin truly to live.

In the soft light Hester Grey still gazes and dreams, sending out prayers which may never re-echo in the blessing craved, but which are not offered in vain. For her and us there are trials in store so long as we walk the world; but the brave heart, and the patient waiting faith, are in His gift, shall we then suffer alone?

"Pray, though the gift you ask for
May never comfort your fears—
May never repay your pleading,
Yet pray, with hopeful tears;
An answer, not that you long for,
But diviner will come one day;
Your eyes are too dim to see it,
Yet strive, and wait, and pray."

After the Dawn.

BY LAURA J. ARTER.

The cottage was a plain one, of a subdued brown color, with a little portico out in front, that was covered with honeysuckles, and a large yard, with a row of thrifty cedars on either side of the walk, and a soft fringe of blue grass laid thickly over it. It looked as if it might be a place to rest both body and soul—a true home in every sense of the word; yet the interior wore an air of discomfort and untidiness almost painful to the beholder. The parlor was a scene of confusion—books on the floor, dust on the mantel-piece and other furniture; the centre table presented the appearance of a badly arranged curiosity shop; chairs seemed to have walked around in a vague, wandering way over the room; in fact, there was no order at all, though a neat woman's hand might have rendered it quite a pretty little room in a very short while.

Seated in a rocking chair near the window, sat a young girl, scarcely eighteen years old, and, but for the careless, untidy appearance of her dress, one would have pronounced her more than ordinarily pretty. Her eyes were full and large, and of a bright black hue; her face was almost oval in shape; her complexion quite dark, but very clear; her cheeks and lips of the deepest crimson; and over her dimpled shoulders hung a mass of glossy curls. On the whole, she was a pretty, intellectual brunette; but in this case, as in many others, the picture, though a fair one of itself, was more than half spoiled by the unsightly frame surrounding it.

Her clothes were thrown on carelessly, and without any regard to neatness or taste; and the pretty little foot, peeping out from the folds of her soiled morning wrapper, had

decidedly a slipshod appearance. At present she was engaged in reading a highly-wrought novel, over which she laughed and cried by turns, in a manner that would have been quite flattering to the author. A faint voice from the next room called to her.

"Abbie, my love, I really wish you would superintend Bridget in the kitchen this morning; my head aches so badly, I do not feel able to stand up a moment longer, and there is more work on hands than usual to-day. Bridget will not have your papa's dinner ready for him in time, and you know how much he dislikes to be kept waiting."

"Oh, mamma! how could you interrupt me at such an affecting place; just as if I should know what to do to assist Bridget? I dare say she can get along well enough if she tries, and I should only be in the way."

Petulantly brushing away three or four actual tears that had been called forth from sympathy with the distressed heroine, Abbie went on with her reading again, feeling angry that her mamma should expect her to perform any of the menial offices about the house. Presently her mother called in again—

"Abbie, child, wont you please come bathe my head with cold water? I am feverish, and it will do me good to feel your hands soothing me again. It is so strange and sweet to have my little daughter with me once more."

The fascinating novel was thrown down sullenly on the floor, and Abbie in no very gentle mood went into her mother's room. The sight of the pale, patient face, in the midst of the pillows, sent a slight twinge of pity through her heart; and in a gentler manner she bathed the hot brow till the pain was half assuaged.

"That will do, darling. How kind you are to me; the pain flies before the soft touch of your fingers." The eyes of the speaker were

moistened with happy tears. "You can go now; I must not selfishly keep you in this close room, when the morning is so beautiful."

Abbie's better nature suggested that she should remain till her mamma was soothed into a quiet slumber; but the thought of the book in the parlor overcame all scruples, so, stooping down and lightly kissing the white face, she glided out of the room, and was soon absorbed in ferreting out the mysterious fate of her heroine.

It was dinner time before she was disturbed again, then the sound of her father's footsteps in the hall, brought her to her feet, and in a moment she was at the door to meet him, and had wound her plump arms around his neck.

"Well, little daughter, what have you been doing all day? Something to please papa or mamma, I'll warrant. It is nice to have our pet at home again." The proud father patted the curly head fondly, not noticing the blush of shame that spread itself over the pretty face.

"Something to please papa or mamma!" Abbie thought of the half-finished novel; the untidy rooms and her wearied mother, with something like regret, but she consoled herself by thinking that they ought not to expect her to do such work as Bridget did.

There was almost a frown on her father's face when he first glanced at the parlor.

"Why, what is the matter, Abbie, that things are in such confusion?"

"Mamma isn't well!"

"Ah! you have been playing nurse, have you, little puss, and haven't had time to straighten things. That is right, my child; your mother is very delicate, and needs your first attention. I can leave her without fear of her being lonely, when our little daughter is here to comfort her."

Abbie felt like crying at the unintentional rebuke; and would have confessed her want of merit, but her mamma, who heard the last sentence, spoke—

"Yes, James, she has soothed me so much that the headache has almost vanished. How thankful we ought to be that our darling's days at school are at last over."

A summons to dinner, here interrupted the conversation, and Abbie was truly thankful for it.

"What shall I bring you to eat, mamma?"

"Nothing, Abbie—I do not feel like eating. Don't think anything about me, but make papa comfortable."

So a week wore away, and Mrs. Willard,

though not really ill, was not yet well enough to leave her room. During this time Abbie's parents were gradually and painfully made aware of her utter uselessness and selfishness. She had come to open rebellion with regard to doing any of the housework—she did not intend to soil her hands or degrade her mind in such a manner, she said. Besides that, she must cultivate her talents; she had no time for ordinary things.

About this time, a poem of the most exciting style—full of broken hearts, intermingled with a wail for a congenial spirit—made its appearance in the village paper—the "Morning Star," over the signature of Mignonette St. Clair. The community was not long kept in ignorance of the real name of the authoress however, and Abbie Willard's friends were duly astonished, to find in her a "star poetess," as the editor, in a compliment a quarter of a column in length, denominated her. After that time, Abbie was closeted in her room daily, foolishly wasting the time she should have employed in assisting her mother, spending it in writing sentimental poems. Her own room was a scene of continual disorder, save when her mother kindly arranged it for her.

Her parents, proud of her newly developed talents, suffered themselves to be blinded to her many faults; and so the soul that really had much that was good in it, was in a fair way to ruin.

Abbie was almost petrified with pleasure one morning, to discover a poem as excruciating as her own, addressed to Mignonette St. Clair, by Adolphus de Percival. Such a pretty name she thought; so aristocratic, and more than likely his own.

After this, the Morning Star became the weekly receptacle of pathetic poems, entitled, "Think of Me;" "I Love Thee," &c., all written by the young poet and poetess, who had so lately flung their dazzling lights in the eyes of the literary world.

Ambitious dreams began to haunt Abbie's brain. She would gain such a reputation as a poetess, that the best journals of the country should be only too glad to secure the efforts of her inspired pen at any cost! Then the miracles she would perform in acts of charity; the distressed families she would relieve; the long tour she would take to countries beautiful enough to arouse all the poetical fire of her brain. And the world should know her as the beautiful and talented Miss Abbie Willard, authoress of the soul-stirring volume of poems just launched on the pleasant ocean of criticism.

Poor little Abbie! her foolish young head was full of nothing but these lightest of light air-castles—no time for assisting her mother; no time for amusing her papa of evenings by singing to him, as he wished her to do; no time for making herself and her surroundings look neat and cheerful—nothing could be thought of but her beloved pen.

A private letter from Adolphus de Percival, (who had obtained her address from the editor of the Star,) full of sentimental nothings, slightly changed the current of her fancies. What a flutter of delight she experienced, as she broke open the daintily perfumed envelop, and cast her eyes, for the first time, over the delicate chirography of Adolphus de Percival. It was such a lofty letter too—so unlike the matter-of-fact letters she usually received; no vulgar allusions to ordinary things; nothing but the most touching sentences about the fragrant flowers, running brooks, birds, moonlight and starlight; all gracefully intermingled with a tone of the deepest admiration for her genius.

Abbie read it over again and again. She longed in her exultation to read it to her mother, but with a self-denial worthy a better cause, she determined that Adolphus de Percival's soul-thoughts, should not be exposed to the vulgar and curious gaze; in her own heart would she lock up his sweet words, there to keep them forever! Then followed a sleepless night, devoted to answering the precious missive, in which she poured out such a wail for sympathy, that the uninitiated would have supposed her the worst abused girl in existence, and which no doubt completely subdued the tender hearted Adolphus. And no doubt, at that moment, little Abbie imagined all her fancied misery a living reality.

The answer came even sooner than she had hoped for. "It was a perfect shadow of her own, a wail of despair, a wild yearning for one sweet friend to comfort and soothe him. "Would she not be that dear friend to him? Would she not turn to him from the cruel-hearted world? Ah! yes, if he had read the soul of the noble and talented Mignonette rightly, she *would* relieve his aching heart by permitting him to be her confidant. Together they would scorn the rude ways of life, together they would seek for happiness, together they would bind up their bruised souls, and together they would die!"

Abbie cried over this truly heart-melting thing for fully a half day, and would not eat her dinner. What cared she for eating, she

indignantly demanded; when a noble soul was being swallowed up in the ocean of human misery? Hers should be the task of comforter—she would grant Adolphus's request before food passed her lips—and she did.

A correspondence two months in length followed this, and the Star continued to be made brighter by the combined efforts of our heroine and her languishing lover.

It was June now—that month that nature has placed as the fairest jewel in the crown of the year. A tedious illness confined poor Mrs. Willard to her room. There was little comfort to be expected from Abbie. She was completely absorbed in developing her genius. When she could find no excuse to prevent her from soothing her mother's pain, she always did it with such an ill grace, that the poor invalid had a thousand times rather it had not been done at all; and often when Abbie had flung herself spitefully out of the room, when requested by her father to perform some light duty, Mrs. Willard would cry silently, till her pillow was wet with tears, and her head ached and throbbed worse than before. Yet no complaint came from the thin, white lips; she never forgot for a moment, that it was her darling child.

A letter from Adolphus threw her into an unenviable state of mind. It announced that the next morning he would have the honor of visiting her in her own home. What should she do? Her mother was sick; the whole house a scene of confusion, and Bridget not at all inclined to make any extra exertions. She had enough practical common sense left to know, that even the ethereal Adolphus de Percival could not help noticing the untidiness of her home, so she must go to work herself, and put things in order. Accordingly, rooms were swept, dusted, and the furniture arranged with care and taste, and finally everything was finished but the parlor. Gathering up the broom with frantic haste, the furniture and room were soon enveloped in a cloud of dust, and Abbie, with her face hot and flushed, her hair in tangled curls around her head, after opening the doors and windows to let in the air, went into the kitchen after a bucket of hot soap-suds, and was soon down on her knees in the hall cleaning off the dirty oil-cloth.

In the very midst of it, a knock at the door caused her to look up, and there, face to face with her, stood a gentleman dressed in the height of fashion, with a great display of jewelry and a strong perfume of musk. Abbie's

heart told her it must be Adolphus, and blushing with shame and mortification, till her face was warmer and more flushed than ever, she asked him into the parlor. He inquired for Miss Abbie Willard, and being informed she stood before him, he introduced himself, and here the conversation seemed fated to end.

Abbie stammered forth some incoherent excuses about the appearance of the room and herself; whilst the elegant Adolphus, pitying her confusion, made several attempts at complimenting her industry; but it was not in the programme he had arranged, and he miserably failed. Abbie was ashamed of herself and of her plain home. How poverty stricken they must appear to Mr. de Percival. He was wealthy; she felt sure of that from his dress, and she could see he felt ill at ease—of course he could not feel otherwise, to be so much out of his sphere.

How she would have loved to burst right out crying—to think *she*, Mignonette St. Clair, should have been caught in such a plight, and by Adolphus de Percival of all others! The interview was a short one—both, at the unexpected turn of events, had forgotten all their sentiment, and were as common place as the most ordinary people.

Mr. de Percival was disappointed—from an eloquent compliment the editor of the *Star* had paid to Abbie, in which he referred in a rather indefinite manner to her worth and wealth, Adolphus had been led to believe that in Mignonette St. Clair, he should find beauty, poetry, and wealth combined. But, “a change came o’er the spirit of his dream.” He was on his way to visit an uncle, he said; and although Abbie knew he was in the village till the next evening, he did not call again.

Here then was an end to all her romantic dreams. Adolphus could never lower his lofty mind to her level in life; he would never visit her again, since he had found her engaged in such degrading toil. In vain the most pathetic lines were addressed to the lamented poet; there was no response. The muse of the fastidious Adolphus had evidently been frightened away at sight of the unlucky poetess with a bucket of suds, and had never returned. Adolphus was effectually silenced.

Abbie sat up late of nights, writing poems to be published after her death; (she had resolved since she could not *live* for Mr. de Percival, she would *die* for him;) slept little, ate less, and exercised least of all. She was in a fair way to make herself ill, when one morning Bridget disturbed her as she was writing

“An Ode to the Moan,” with the information that there was a gentleman in the parlor who wished to see her. She gave a careless glance at the neat card Bridget placed in her hand. “John Leonard.” The name was a strange one, and not at all poetical. Why had he come to disturb her? he could never understand her—her spirit mate had flown.

She rose languidly to go down stairs. Bridget asked, in astonishment, if she intended going down in that plight. She had on a soiled white wrapper that was defaced here and there with a blot of ink; her fingers were dark with the same fluid; her hair tangled, and her small slippers were down at the heels, and revealed a pair of dirty hose.

“It makes but little difference, Bridget; my days on earth are numbered, and I care not how I look during my short sojourn here.” Down into the parlor she accordingly went, with her pretty mouth drawn down into a woe-begone expression, and her half finished ode in her hand.

The gentleman rose as she entered, and as he advanced to meet her, she saw that although he was not handsome, there was an air of good breeding and refinement about him, that revealed the character of a true gentleman. As she felt his polite yet criticising gaze bent upon her, she was half sorry she had not followed Bridget’s suggestion and changed her dress.

He had a letter for her from her cousin, Rachel Willard, of Boston, requesting her to come and spend the next three or four months with her. Abbie, in her eagerness to get her parents to consent, forgot her resolution of dying of a broken heart. She even insisted on Mr. Leonard staying for dinner; an honor he was compelled to decline for want of time. Her parents willingly consented to her cousin’s plan, and in a short while she had penned a reply, which Mr. Leonard was to deliver. In her haste she dropped her unfinished ode, and as Mr. Leonard picked it up and handed it to her, she felt almost rebuked to think she had, for one moment, forgotten her great bereavement.

Mr. Leonard was half pained, half amused with her. He had expected to see a pretty, neat, sensible little girl; such as Rachel had remembered her to be, and as she had been described to him. But this sentimental love-lorn girl, fairly luxuriating in her want of taste and neatness, whose inky fingers and freshly written poem had forced themselves unwelcomely on his sight, surprised and almost

shocked him. He tried to think as kindly of her as he could, however; trusting that once she was placed under the beneficial influence of her cousin, she would become changed for the better.

Her preparations were finished in two or three weeks, and after half a day's journey on the cars, she was met at the depot by her uncle, and was soon in his carriage, on the way to his residence, which was in the suburbs of the city. It was a beautiful place; wealth and taste had been combined in making it an elegant home, and as Abbie and her uncle went up the shell walk, that was bordered on either side with the costliest, most fragrant flowers, she gave vent to her admiration and pleasure in a thousand artless ways.

She was welcomed warmly by Rachel and her Aunt Mary, and to her surprise, after their greetings were over, Mr. Leonard came forward and gave her a cordial shake of the hand. She learned afterwards that he was a ward of her uncle's, a young lawyer, and that he lived in the family.

Two months afterwards, she wrote in her journal:—

“SEPTEMBER 12th. How I look back over the past years of my life, and thank God that I was not allowed to go on in my blind folly. There is so much that I can do to make others happy, if I will only try; so much that will lighten the hearts of those I love. What a selfish life mine was till I came here, and how much I thank Cousin Rachel and John Leonard, for pointing out to me the true path of happiness, and guiding my wayward feet into it ere it was forever too late.

“I recollect so well, how the second morning after my arrival, as I sat writing a poem for the Star, Cousin Rachel in her neat morning dress, with her brown hair taken back in smooth, shiny folds from her white brow, came into my beautiful room, and gathering up pen and paper, laughingly carried them off and locked them up in her desk, saying they should remain there till the roses had come back to my cheeks and the light to my eyes; in fact, until I had ceased my nonsensical talk of dying of a broken heart. I remember how, in my blind self-importance, I thought she could never appreciate the delicate and refined feelings of my soul; that though she might be good enough at heart, there was nothing high and intellectual in her character. How can I ever thank her as I should, for arousing me to my better self again?

“After she had come back to my room, she

commenced chiding me in her pleasant, cheery way, for not arranging my dress more carefully, and finally succeeded in getting me to put on a cool, clean wrapper, curl my hair nicely, and help her gather and arrange bouquets for our rooms. From that time forth, she never allowed me to touch pen or paper, save to write to dear papa and mamma; and somehow I found it easier every day to yield.

“I used to wonder how she could always be so contented and happy, till I found that it was by making herself useful, and contributing to the happiness of others. She is never entirely idle. Of a morning she is always doing a thousand little necessary things which the servants could do, but she prefers doing them herself, and thus lighten their labors. Then she is so kind to her mother, if she chances to be ill—the most affectionate and patient of nurses. I blush when I think of how unkindly I always treated poor, suffering mamma, when she was sick—I trust I shall be a better laughter hereafter.

“Then she is so charitable to the poor, denying herself many little luxuries, that she may relieve some suffering creature. Always the same loving daughter and friend; taking life cheerfully, and if need be, resignedly. By degrees she led me into an interest in her pursuits, and I almost forgot my imaginary sorrows, in the new sense of happiness that pervaded my whole being. It seemed as if a something, that had long been dormant in my nature, had become full of life beneath her gentle guidance—a chord of actual music vibrated in my heart.

“I had been here but a short time, when, as Rachel and I were out walking one morning, I came face to face for the second time with Adolphus de Percival. He bowed, smiled, and passed on. Rachel turned to me in amazement,

“‘Why Abbie, do you know Mr. Smith?’

“‘I am acquainted with Mr. Adolphus de Percival, the gentleman who just passed us,’ I said, trying to look as unconscious as if I were not to break my heart about that very fascinating individual.

“‘That! Mr. de Percival! Why, Abbie, it is only plain Mr. Smith—yes, I recollect now, his name is Adolphus; but what ever put such an idea into your head as to call him de Percival?’

“I explained as well as I could. Rachel looked half serious, half inclined to laugh.

“‘I had no idea matters were so serious, Abbie. He is really nothing but a light-headed

shop—a clerk in a dry goods establishment up town; celebrated for nothing but writing lovesick nonsense to every girl who will permit him to take such a liberty.’

“‘Oh Rachel! you must certainly be mistaken. He is all refinement—all soul. Surely you have judged him harshly.’ I think now, there were tears of wounded feelings in my eyes as I spoke, and Rachel evidently saw them, and hastened to change the conversation.

“That evening a servant brought up a card to me—‘Adolphus de Percival Smith.’

“Rachel picked up the card, and laughed as she saw the name. ‘I should advise you not to go down, Abbie, but I can see you want to, and besides that, I trust my little cousin has too much sense to encourage such a fellow.’ She kissed me as she spoke, and I ran hastily down the stairs.

“Of the three weeks that followed, I shall write but little. I can only wonder now that I ever tolerated Mr. Smith for a moment; that I ever for a moment allowed myself to be blinded to his many defects, and shallow intellect. He vowed again and again that he loved me—that life without me would be a blank. He implored me to try his love. It would endure all tests, he said. To die for my sake would be his greatest pleasure; what were a lifetime to him compared with a moment of my happiness! His extravagant words touched my girlish vanity, but never reached my heart.

“I woke up one morning with a burning fever and an aching head. A physician was called, who pronounced it a very severe attack of measles. I had been walking in the heavy night dew and had taken cold, consequently the disease, though simple of itself, unless the greatest care was taken, might speedily prove fatal.

“The long, painful days and nights that followed, seem like a dream to me now—the loving kindness shown me by Aunt Mary and Rachel—their sad, pale faces flitting around my bed-side. At last the danger was passed through, and as I lay apparently sleeping, I heard Rachel’s sweet voice thanking God that I was saved to them. How fervently I joined in her earnest amen! She came up to my bed-side when she heard my voice, and winding her arms around my neck, burst into tears. Her long pent-up feelings, now that the crisis was passed, must have vent, and she lay with her head on my pillow, sobbing like a little child.

“‘Don’t Rachel—don’t cry,’ I said, my own voice tremulous with emotion. ‘I am not

worthy of your tears, sweet cousin, but since God has seen fit to spare my life, I trust His kindness has not been in vain, and with your help, Rachel, I am going to try to be a better girl.’

“She kissed me tenderly, looked into my face with her clear, earnest eyes, and I knew another grateful prayer was in her heart.

“‘Oh Abbie! do not forget your good resolutions; but, hereafter, be the true, noble woman God intended you should be.’

“I pressed her hand, and turning on my pillow, was soon wrapt in a refreshing slumber. It was late in the evening when I awoke. Rachel was by my bed-side; her face wearing a look that puzzled me.

“‘I don’t know whether I ought to give you this or not, Abbie,’ she said, displaying a tiny letter in the well known handwriting of Mr. Smith. ‘I’m afraid to excite you; and yet the poor wretch has pleaded so strongly to have it delivered, that I suppose I must comply with his request.’

“She placed it in my hands, and I slowly broke open the envelop. I read it through carefully, and lay silently studying over the contents several minutes. It was full of the most loving sympathy—a continued assurance of his perpetual love, and an offer to die for me, if it would give me pleasure. Somehow the letter did not please me; there seemed to be too much imagination in it, to be much reality. Yet what should I do? to believe his words, he was dying for a glance of my face. I handed the note to Rachel. She read it through, smiling all the while, then turned to me.

“‘Do you believe all this pack of nonsense, Abbie?’

“‘I could not say exactly that I did; yet I could not bear to think that my idol had been entirely imaginary.

“‘What shall I do, Rachel? Help me, will you not?’

“‘She sat still a moment, as if thinking something over.

“‘I’ll tell you what, Abbie, you shall see him, and put his love to the test as he implores you to do. If he fails to verify his words though, you must promise to forget him—promise to throw him aside as you would a badly written novel. Will you?’

“‘With all my heart, Rachel.’ What else could I say?

“The next evening Adolphus came. I was excited almost into a fever, and Rachel blamed herself for having permitted the interview at

all. How Adolphus's love was to be tested, I did not know; but I could not help believing he would be all he had promised. At last, the well-known ring was heard at the door, the well-known voice in the hall, and I heard Mr. Leonard asking him to follow him up stairs to my room. How my heart beat and throbbed with wild excitement then! Rachel, who stood by my chair, said kindly—

“Abbie! Abbie! you promised to be calm.”

The footsteps paused outside of the open door, and I heard Mr. Leonard's clear, strong voice, say—

“‘Trusting to your repeated assurances that to die for Miss Abbie would be happiness to you, did you but know it would contribute a drop of joy in her life, we have not thought it necessary before to tell you the nature of the disease with which she is afflicted. As you are no doubt aware, the small-pox is raging in different parts of the city; but Miss Abbie is now recovering from a severe attack of—’

“The gallant and valiant Adolphus de Percival Smith did not stop to hear the last word of the sentence, which proved to be ‘measles.’ I heard footsteps rushing frantically down the steps at a rate almost suicidal, and the sharp clang of the gate, scarcely a second afterwards, announced the departure of my poetical lover.

“From that day to this, Adolphus de Percival has never intruded himself upon my presence. As soon as I was able to write, I sent him a note, brief and sarcastic, asking for my letters. In due time they came, and his own were returned. How eagerly I burned the last silly, nonsensical letter, glad to know they were no longer in existence. So ended my acquaintance with Mr. Smith.

“The time since then has been spent pleasantly and usefully. Rachel and Mr. Leonard have been the best and dearest of friends to me. I hope I shall yet become worthy of them.

“The other day I had the pleasantest and strangest surprise! Looking over a port-folio in the library, I found it was filled with some of the most beautiful stories I had ever read. They had evidently been taken from magazines, and, with a soul full of admiration, I turned to Mr. Leonard, who was present, and asked him if he knew the author. He glanced at the port-folio, and turned to me, with his face full of feeling.

“‘Rachel wrote those stories, and many more, equally as beautiful, Abbie.’ There was a proud tenderness in his voice.

“Rachel! cheerful, busy Rachel! I sat down in amazement. I never felt so completely humbled; never before so fully realized all the modest beauty of Rachel's character, and the arrogance of my own. Dear, generous Rachel! how kindly she had borne the self-importance I had plainly displayed in my supposed mental superiority over her. I cried from mortification and shame. How petty and contemptible my intolerable pride must have seemed to her; yet she had humbled me only by her forbearance.

“It is almost a week now, since then, and Rachel's good example has not been lost upon me, I trust. And this is why, old journal, I have come back to you after such a long absence. Mr. Leonard is calling me to take a walk with him, and I must go.”

The next month of Abbie's life went along smoothly and happily. How or when she began to love John Leonard, she never knew. She would not admit to herself that she *did* love him; yet every fibre of her heart vibrated with the most delicate rapture at the sound of his clear, frank voice. She knew how more than useless such a feeling for him must be; she remembered, with burning cheeks, her first appearance before him, and her foolish conversation to him; and she knew him well enough to be sure that such a thing could not be forgotten. True, she had changed since then; but would he believe such a change would be permanent? She dare not hope it. Yet now, when for the first time, she knew what it was to experience a pure, deep love, and one, too, that must be in vain, nobly she strove to conquer it; nobly she struggled against all selfish repinings, that the road of her life must wind amidst rugged and dark places, far away from that other beautiful road over which John Leonard's feet were travelling.

She believed, too, that Rachel loved Mr. Leonard, and that he in return lavished all the wealth of his soul upon her. She knew how worthy they were of each other; she felt her own want of goodness—so the girl who, three months before, had longed to die of a broken heart, for a man whom she neither loved or respected; now that there were real clouds hanging over her, took up the burden of life bravely and cheerfully, striving only to catch the few rays of sunshine that penetrated through the darkness. No useless wailings, no lost hours, no duties left undone. Abbie had reached the goal of true womanhood.

The time for her to return to her quiet home

came at last. She was glad of it, and yet she had been very happy at her uncle's. She longed to tear herself from the presence of John Leonard, dear though he was to her. She felt it was sinful to torture herself and to wrong Rachel by her very thoughts, even though they were secret, and that it would be better at once to tear herself away from this faint glimpse of happiness, than to go groping her way blindly day after day. Then there was much for her to do at home; a thousand duties, till now left undone, by which she could make her dear ones happy.

She stood alone in the library a moment before she started, looking out of the window. A step that sent the blood coursing madly to her face, came to where she stood; a voice that she loved above all earthly music, fell on her ears.

"I have come to tell you good-by, Abbie."

She did not look up; the long black fringes of her eyes were drooping with unshed tears. He took her hand.

"Will you let me write to you sometimes, Abbie—such a letter as a brother might write to his sister?" The earnest eyes looking full in her face.

"Oh, if you only will!" The voice was eager and joyful. "Perhaps you can help me along in the new road I am trying to travel, Mr. Leonard. It is rough and hard now at the beginning, and a few kind words of cheer would sustain my flagging spirits."

"It will grow easier all the while, Abbie. Never pause to look back at your past idle life, but press forward bravely. You will pardon me, Abbie, but, knowing as I do, the depth of your naturally noble soul, and knowing, too, how all your better feelings have been lying in rust and entire uselessness the greater part of your life, I cannot help feeling a brother's frankness and kindly interest in your future welfare; and if I write to you sometimes in a manner that may at first seem harsh to you, recollect the good feeling that prompts it. Good-by, now, Abbie, and God bless you!"

He stooped down, and kissed her forehead. Abbie felt it must be for the last time, yet crushing down the burning tears in her heart, she returned his friendly pressure of the hand, and left the room.

A few moments later, and she was gone. It seemed to her as if she had left behind her a portion of her very being. It was like the last ray of sunshine the doomed felon beholds

ere he is forever shut up in gloom and darkness.

* * * * *

A year full of lights and shadows followed—a year laden with soul-struggles and heart-aches to poor Abbie. How many times had her faltering feet almost refused to do their duty? yet, with renewed courage, she strove against all selfish sorrows. And she had come out pure in spirit, and contented in heart, at the end of the long, long year. Everything that a good daughter could be, she had been to her parents. She had taken all the household cares from her weary mother, and was repaid a thousand-fold by seeing the light come back to the sunken eyes; by the cheerful spirits, the loving smiles, and returning health. Abbie was now in reality what her fond parents had at first hoped she would be.

After her return from her uncle's, she learned from her father, that in consequence of a falling off in business, he should not be able to supply them with many of the little luxuries to which they had been accustomed, and that he could only hope, by the closest economy, to prevent becoming largely indebted before the expiration of a year.

Abbie secretly determined to aid him, and before a week had passed by, she applied for and obtained the situation of principal of the village Academy for the coming year, at a salary of three hundred dollars. Her parents demurred at first. What could their little Abbie know about teaching? She surely could not be in earnest? But Abbie was firm in her good resolution, and gracefully did she fill her new position.

So the year had passed away, and through many difficulties and trials, Abbie had come out unscathed and victorious. All this while her letters from Rachel and Mr. Leonard had been coming to cheer her on. The love she felt for John Leonard, though as deep as ever, was purified and chastened, and she loved to think that though he was lost to her, she was at least worthy of him. Rachel had visited her once, and was astonished and rejoiced at the complete reformation.

It was drawing near Christmas now, and Abbie's school term had expired the week before. She had coaxed her mother to visit her Aunt Mary for a fortnight at least, so that she might have more leisure to prepare for the holidays. How busy she was then—what a complete transformation the whole house underwent! Abbie was not sparing of her hard-earned money. The parlor was furnished

completely with new but tasty furniture, and the chairs, carpet and curtains, that belonged to it, were transferred to her mother's room, making it of itself a cheerful little parlor. Every room in the house was thoroughly cleansed; every bed as white and soft as a snow-drift. She had finished her generosity by purchasing her mamma a beautiful brown silk dress, and by placing in her father's armed-chair a pretty dressing-gown, made by her own busy fingers.

It was the day her mother was to return. Nothing more was to be done but to finish frosting the cakes for Bridget; so, tucking back her curls, pinning up the sleeves of her neat gingham dress, and donning a long apron of Bridget's, she was soon busy in her pleasant task. She was thinking of the joyful surprise in store for her mother, when Bridget, with her face wreathed with smiles, appeared at the door, and told her that Mrs. Willard had come.

In a moment, Abbie had rushed into the parlor, and into her mother's arms, not noticing, in her glad surprise, that there was a gentleman standing at the window.

She felt her heart leap up in a wild, glad joy, as the dear voice of John Leonard fell on her ears, and his hand clasped hers eagerly—fondly.

"Have you no word of welcome for me, Abbie, after our long separation?"

How his eyes brimmed over with untold tenderness! She felt as if she were dreaming. What did it all mean? Had he come to torture her with his kindness, only to leave her more lonely than ever? She burst into tears. It was weak, but she could not help it. They were alone now; her mother had intuitively left the room.

"Abbie, dearest little girl in the world, surely you can pardon me for this long trial of your love, when I tell you how through all the weary months I have yearned to be with you—yearned to clasp you to my heart—to hold you there forever. I read your jealously guarded secret a year ago, dear Abbie; I saw it in your face the hour you left me alone in the library; and now, dear Abbie, I have come for you, never to doubt your goodness and your love, so long as life shall last. You have proved yourself all, and more than I hoped for. What have you to say to me, little girl?" His strong arm was around her, his warm kisses on her lips.

She could only wonder in her great joy why he had ever loved her at all—why he had not

loved Rachel, who was so much better than she—so good and talented?

"Because Rachel has always been a dear sister to me, and nothing more; because, good and pure as she is, my little Abbie is more than sister or mother—more than all the world to me."

So they talked, till kind Mrs. Willard said tea was ready, and Abbie looked down and blushed, as she recollected for the first time her long checked apron and pinned-up sleeves.

"Never mind, darling," John said to her; "it is a thousand times more becoming than a soiled dress, and idle hands."

We will look once more into Abbie's journal, and then our long story closes.

"MAY 1st.—To think that John Leonard, the noblest and best of men, loves me! Yet it is real, because, before the year is another day older, I shall be his proud and happy wife. The white silk dress lying on my bed; the soft, rich veil, almost hiding it; all a present from my dear Cousin Rachel; even the sparkling diamond ring on my finger, tells me it is not a dream. How happy we shall be in our beautiful home. Oh, John! a home anywhere in the world would be a beautiful one to me, so that you were with me. The future is so bright now. Dear mamma and papa can live comfortably and happily the remainder of their days, for John has done all for them that a generous man could do for the parents of the woman he loved.

"He came to me this morning, and laying his dear head against me, talked so earnestly and beautifully. 'What should I do without my little darling now? She has grown to be the brightest and best part of my existence. Abbie, blessed be God that He has given us to each other!'

"I leaned down and kissed the high, white brow, and my heart has echoed ever since—blessed be God! Yes, thank God!—thank God!"

Confession of a Student.

The following remarkable letter we find in the "Independent," addressed to the editor. Its perusal will set mere book devourers—those who are always taking in, but never giving out—to thinking in the right direction.

Mr. Editor: I read your sermons in *The Independent*, and a sentence in one of them has filled me with self-abasement. Your doctrine is, *He who receives is bound to give*. I have just passed the "grand climacteric" of life, and have lived these sixty-three years as a semi-recluse. My father had money enough to supply all my wants, because all my wants were comprised in one word—*books*.

In a large and retired family, I was my father's favorite daughter, and he allowed me to become a book-eater. I read every new publication of interest that my time would allow, and all my time was my own. I permitted no one to direct or hinder me, and cared not who criticised me. I rambled much among the libraries of my favorites, Philadelphia and New Haven, but visited so few friends, and worked so little for the poor, and watched so little with the sick, that my life was one breathless chase after mere mental self-sustenance. As a woman, I suppose I have a heart, but my intellect seems to have eaten it up. Scholarship has been my idolatry, not so much for the fame of it as for its agreeable self-absorption. My first ambition was languages, and I tried Latin, Greek, French, Russian, German and Italian. I have read some of their historians and poets. Dante's *Inferno*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Shakespeare's *Tempest*, I nearly committed to memory. For the last forty years it has been my habit to run over the best articles in *The Edinburgh Review* and *London Times*. Of my own countrymen, I prefer Prescott, Bryant, and Longfellow; and of our female authors, I most relish Mrs. Stowe and Miss Sedgwick.

I do now with grief confess, that I have been a gormandizer of books. It seems as if I am now a mere conglomerate, *wholly made up of others*. I am they. I wonder if any of my original personal identity is left! I am afraid that in another world each author who has enriched my mind will come and take from me what he gave, and thus leave me poor indeed. Perhaps they all would say, "Why did you not do unto others as we did to you? Could you not find any ignorant and necessitous whom you could benefit? What apology have you to

offer to the ten thousand uncultivated whom you could have enlightened?"

Mr. Editor: From my inmost heart I cannot help feeling that the condemnations of your sermon fall upon me here. *He who receives is bound, in his time and measure, to give*. This maxim is common sense, Christian politics, and Gospel truth, binding on every grade of ability. You quote that sacred (yet to me damning) text, (Prov. iii. 27,) "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it." For more than fifty years I have hoarded knowledge with a miser's greed, and during that time have distributed next to nothing to the necessities of the ignorant or the young! I have never written or published a review of any book I ever read! I have passed a life of intense intellectual selfishness; and now I feel that my accumulations are so many witnesses against me. In my abysmal mortification and regret, I begin to rank myself among the first-class pirates! In the beginning of my course I acted from the worthy desire of improving my mind and increasing my happiness. The intellectual appetite strengthened every time it was gratified; and the more I hungered, the more I ate, forgetting, alas! that the whole of life does not consist in eating.

Oh! it is a mistake, an awful mistake, an inexcusable mistake, *to live for one's self*. Nature's doctrine and the Gospel's doctrine is, "Be ready to distribute, willing to communicate." The lake that turns the mill-wheel keeps healthy by its outlettings. I have denied myself through life the happiness of giving. I cannot now excuse myself for not translating and publishing some of the noble works which have appeared in Germany and Russia and France, or for not taking the place of head in some female college, or orphan charitable society, or city mission. I now think of half a dozen ways in which my talents and attainments might have been employed to strengthen the risen and mold the rising generation; yet, woe is me, I have neglected them all.

Mr. Editor: It is with acutest heart-pain that I have written the above. I write thus not to ask your advice or your opinion. I need neither. I write that I may warn every young lady throughout my country *not to do as I have done*. My young sisters, choose some department in human life according to your talents and taste, and then study and labor for its advancement in knowledge, virtue, and happiness; *thus you will live best for yourselves by living most out of yourselves*.

Kindness Towards Animals.

BY HELEN R. CUTLER.

Little things indicate character.

Walking out the other day beyond the limits of the village, I came to a nice looking farmhouse. I will stop and rest a little, I said to myself, and get a draught of water, "sparkling with coolness," from that well in the yard; so I opened the gate and went in.

A large, well-kept looking dog lay, sentinel-like, on the front door-stone. I shrank at first; but as he looked at me with an eye a little curious, but kindly, I addressed him by an imaginary name, at which he came down from his perch, wagging me a welcome, and trotted along patronizingly by my side without a bark or a growl, showing himself not only well fed but well bred, quite different from the dogs at a house I had passed a little while before, where "Tray, Blanche and Sweetheart," all ran out and barked furiously at me.

As I passed around, I saw pots of flowers sitting in the porch. Things promise well, here, I said to myself—though cultivation of flowers is not to be taken as implying evidence of refinement of taste. It often results from imitation as well as an innate love of the beautiful, as with fine clothes, fine houses, fine pictures, and fine furniture, people have them because their neighbors have them.

You have seen a child sitting on the floor, muttering over a piece of paper or a book, in imitation of his father, who is enjoying a literary feast, reading some favorite author. He does not know but that he has the same enjoyment from his book or paper as his father from his. So these imitators do not know but their birds and flowers, and the objects of beauty they have gathered around them, afford them as fine and exquisite a pleasure as is derived from them by those of cultivated tastes.

Rapping at the door, a neat and pleasant looking lady presented herself, who, I saw at once, was the mistress of the house. She invited me to step in, and I did so, taking the nicely stuffed chair she proffered me. Though not approving of stuffed chairs on general principles, I found this very comfortable. I made myself known, and then fell into conversation with the lady upon the weather, the appearance of the neighborhood, &c.

Glancing around, I saw behind the stove a couple of chairs, each chair having a cushion in it, and on each cushion a sleek, plump cat, looking so placid, and so enjoying the sense of existence with their heads resting on their

velvety paws, that it soothed me to look at them. My mind referred back to the well-kept looking dog I had seen, and I glanced involuntarily at the mistress of these comfortable animals, to see if her bump of benevolence was not well developed. It was. Then a sound of music came to me—not an instrument—but bird music, poured forth from melodious throats.

Raising my eyes, there before and above me, hung two capacious bird cages, and in each, on their perches, two glossy plumaged canaries, singing thus their thanks to their mistress, as well as to their Maker, for the happiness they enjoyed. The cage was clean and well supplied with bird luxuries, and though I always feel a sense of pain at seeing a bird in bondage, even though it is made tolerable by kind care and attention, these birds seemed happy. The woman was not aware that by all these things I was gauging her character. She had acted from the impulses of a kindly nature, making the dumb creatures dependent on her comfortable; but I had seen contrasting cases—dogs and cats meagre looking, skulking in momentary expectation of a blow. Dirty, close cages crowded with ragged plumaged canaries, too depressed to pipe a note. How I have longed to open the cage door and set these miserable prisoners free. There is a doctrine that all the animals one abuses in this life, will have a chance to retaliate in another.

If this be true, what torments must be endured by some owners of cats, dogs and horses. What lashings and starvings, what kicks and cuffs, and pinchings with cold and hunger, are in store for them.

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Never-to-be-Forgotten Days.

BY A. L. W.

"It was a very little thing; but the joys and griefs of home are almost all made up of little things." This sentence met my eye the other day, and instantly fastened itself into my memory. It is a truth; and, by some chain of thought which might be hard to trace, it gave rise to other thoughts which also I believe are truths.

We often hear and speak of the "sunny hours of childhood," and look back with longing gaze to the time when, by fair New England's rippling rills, or on the West's broad prairies, we had

"Our walk to school amid the dewy grass—
Our sweet flower-gatherings"—

but we forget that there was any reality in our longings then for the future, with its harvest of hopes and promises of pleasure—we forget with what deference we looked up to the "big boys and girls," and how far distant seemed the time which should complete our twentieth year; and now we look back to those early never-to-be-forgotten days, forgetting all the little griefs and sorrows that bittered our cup in passing, and remember but the joys,—little, but full of pleasure, as our griefs were small but choking.

We lose much of the real pleasure we might derive from life, by idle regrettings for the *past*, and useless anticipations of the *future*. We do not school ourselves enough to the enjoyment of the present until it has become the past. We chafe under the sorrows and disap-

pointments, to the exclusion of the realization of the happiness of the present, and then in after days, to which we now look forward with high expectations, we review the matter, and see only the bright side of what is then the past. And so it was when hand in hand with early playmates we wandered through the meadows, curling dandelions and holding buttercups under one another's chin. Our joys were trifling—so were our sorrows; but if one could give us pleasure, so could the other give us pain.

And when in later years we've wandered where the apple blossoms fell around the old well-curb, at the old farm-house by the hill, where once we used to drink, when the long, drowsy summer afternoon was through and we were let from school, how like a happy dream it seemed to muse upon our long past childish sports. And under the great pine tree that stood upon the hill above the rock, how often have we lain and dreamed upon the image of the world as it would be when we should be the workers; and how unreal it seemed that we should ever live to tell of the "times when we were young." And now, how are we parted from the scenes and forms which then we loved. How is the old school scattered—some are married—some are dead. Not long ago I heard that one was dead—one whose first footsteps on the snow with boyish gallantry I guided—far away among the hills and singing water-falls of the Green Mountain State she sleeps with many other friends, with whom when life was very new we played among the flowers.

You may not remember as I do the round bend in the Otter where we used to fish, and where one of our number was drowned;—and you have never seen that little gem of lakes called Dunmore, nestling at the foot of the great mountain. One lovely summer morning, years ago, in company with a cousin, I set out to visit the lake. Words fail to describe the glories of that summer day. A few white, fleecy clouds were scattered round the zenith, while the sheep upon the hill-side, the cattle standing knee-deep in the cool water of the lake, and gazing with longing eyes upon the neighboring grain which the swift-winged zephyrs were moving in soft rolling wavelets as the shadow of some stray cloud passed over, presented a scene to charm a poet's heart and form a subject for a painter's pencil.

And among such scenes my childhood's hours passed; and still I love to think of *home* as again, sometime in the future, to be

placed among those landscapes, whose combinations with other things go so far to the making of my never-to-be-forgotten days. Your remembrances of the past are different from these, and after this in years still to come, when circumstances shall have happened to make *these* never-to-be-forgotten days, our recollections will be different as our paths in life shall be unlike. Whether our future days shall be as *happily* never-to-be-forgotten, remains to be determined. And when we enter the dark valley and the river of death, and the waters of temptation struggle and buffet against our souls, whether our never-to-be-forgotten days shall then serve as a beacon on the farther shore to guide us to the hills of peace, or, as a dark and lowering cloud above, shall wrap us in eternal night, depends upon the paths we tread through life. Our never-to-be-forgotten days to come in after years will be no more mixed up with bitterness than those which now have passed. Our valuation of higher, deeper and more intellectual pleasures, will be accompanied by keener appreciation of disappointments. And ever as our capacity for enjoyment is enlarged, and sorrows heavier come upon us, our strength will be augmented for the endurance of those greater burdens. Our childhood's pastimes were not unmixed with pain; but in our stronger years, when sometime we behold our

—"fleet of glass
Wrecked on a reef of visionary gold,"

that will be no greater trial for our strengthened souls to battle than was once the loss of some poor childish toy, which now we look on but to smile.

As our reasoning powers become developed many are the paths which open to allure us—paths either up to the temple of Fame or through the labyrinthine garden to Fortune's bower, or maybe, to simple rural pleasures, where some noble stream flows majestically along to meet its mate upon their marriage morn, amid the sound of bridal bells heard in the rippling waves as the waters meet with kisses, and in their united strength roll on to join the mighty ocean. We may all have different ideals as to what we would our lives should be—as for me, I would remember that—

"The path of duty is the way to glory," and
"He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purple, which outrodden
All voluptuous garden roses."

And finally, when he,

"Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward and prevailed,
Shall find the toppling crag of duty scaled,
Are close upon the shining table-lands,
To which our God himself is moon and sun."

Adventures among the Rebels." It is a volume to stir the reader's blood. The author says:—

"I have prepared this work from the single stand point of uncompromising devotion to the American Union as established by our fathers, and unmitigated hostility to the armed rebels who are seeking its destruction. My ancestors fought in its defence; and while their blood flows in my veins, I shall instinctively recoil from bartering away the glory of its past and the prophecy of its future for the stained record of that vile thing, begotten by fraud, crime, and bad ambition, christened a Southern Confederacy. I cannot exchange historic renown for disgrace, national honor for infamy, how splendid soever may be the bribe, or how violent soever may be the compulsion. This is my faith as an American citizen."

Throughout his book, the Parson calls things by their right names. He is rough, and strong, and indignant, writing as he speaks, with emphasis. In half apology for his style, he gives this sentence:—

"Extreme fastidiousness of taste may, perhaps, shrink with over-sensitiveness from some of the language I have employed. But it was no time for dalliance with polished sentences or enticing words; for an imminent necessity—like the 'burden' of the old Hebrew prophets—was upon us, and the cause of our Lord and land could be best served by the sturdy rhetoric of defiance and the unanswerable logic of facts. The traitors merited a sword-thrust style, and deserved the strongest epithet I have applied."

PARSON BROWNLOW'S BOOK.

Among the books on our table we find Parson Brownlow's "*Sketches of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of Secession; with a Narrative of Personal*

rested on green fields flecked with wild flowers, and barred with golden sunbeams. Fountains of music gushed up in the sweet-scented air, and bird-wings fluttered in the vines trained up to the windows. The old orchard was an ocean of beauty, the faintest breeze stirred its billows into motion—pink bubbles and white crested foam, seemed the sprays of flowers as they rippled over the sturdy trees. Many a wood-lark found its nest velvet-lined, and crimson-cushioned, on its return at eventide to its favorite tree.

Just at the foot of the garden could be seen the meadow sweet with clover, and the streamlet flashing in the sunlight like a silvery ribbon, its edges embroidered with blue-bells and violets; and wound gracefully around them all, was the hedge of privet, with its glossy, myrtle-like leaves, and the blossoms scattered in amongst the dark foliage, like flakes of snow. The garden was purple with lilacs, and blushed and paled with roses, pinks and syringas. The view was a lovely one, and the two men who gazed upon it appreciated its beauty.

A voice clear and musical floated to them across the meadow, and fluttering after it, in careless grace, came a slight, bright-eyed girl, her hands full of clover blossoms and early golden grain, and her cheeks rosy with healthful exercise.

The younger of the two gentlemen smiled a proud, happy smile, when he saw her. His whole face said, she is beautiful, and good, and loving, and she is *mine*. His friend read the thought, and said deridingly—

"You are very proud of her, no doubt—you think she would never have loved any other man as she loves you. You believe her to be a miracle of constancy; that in the hour of adversity her love would wind itself even closer around you. You will learn better, against you have seen as much of life as I have. I tell you, Reginald, there is no such thing as genuine love existing in the hearts of the other sex. Do not look so angry, but I would wager my life, that at the first evil turn of fortune, your peerless Beatrice would vanish like a mist, and leave you to grope your way through life in pain and darkness."

"Stop now, Fairfax, if you value my friendship. You know nothing of Beatrice Duncan. Because it has been your misfortune to meet with women whose lives are a perpetual falsehood, you have no right to think *all* women are treacherous. I know that Beatrice Duncan does love me, that she has a soul above falsehood, and as pure and true a heart as beats

Reginald Lyle's Love.

BY LAURA J. ARTER.

CHAPTER I.

My story is founded at Oaklands. The Oaklands I write of, is not to be found on the map of any state in our glorious old Union—yet Oaklands really exists; a pretty name for a pretty country place. Let me step into the large parlor of the roomy house, and tell you how Oaklands appeared one summer in 18—. I will not give the precise date, for I have an awkward way of blundering into ridiculous mistakes whenever I attempt to remember dates of any description. To avoid this, I shall only say that it was in May, in the first part of the month.

Two gentlemen were sitting by the low, open window, conversing pleasantly. Their eyes

the wide world." Reginald Lyle's face was flushed with honest indignation, as he turned to his skeptical friend.

"I believe you think so, Reginald, but from what I have seen of Miss Duncan's disposition, I very much fear you are mistaken. It is very easy to prate of a lasting love, so long as cupid's wand is inlaid with pearls, and flashing with diamonds. Even you would not *dare* to test her sincerity." The cold, stoical words and mocking smile exasperated Reginald Lyle almost beyond endurance.

"If any other man living should speak to me in that manner, I would make him recall his words, if it cost me my life. But you know not what you are saying. Not *dare* to test Beatrice Duncan's love! Why Fairfax, I should not fear to tell her I was penniless—she would cling to me all the same."

"Try it, my dear fellow! Only try it! If the experiment doesn't give you a new estimate of human nature, I will acknowledge myself fairly defeated. It will be the easiest thing in the world to do. Just allow me to get up some feasible story of broken banks and disastrous speculations, and the work will be done. You will be amazed to see that Beatrice considers gold one of the necessary attributes of love."

"If I consented to your proposition, Fairfax, I should be acting a lie. I cannot reconcile the idea with my conscience."

"You are afraid, I see. I supposed you would be. Your conscience is very tender." His lip curled scornfully. It stung Lyle into desperation.

"I am *not* afraid. To convince you, I consent to act a mean subterfuge for the first time in my life. Circulate any and every story of misfortune that you choose, so long as you do not touch my honor. You will be ashamed of your cynical views of womanhood, when you see how nobly Beatrice will brave the storm for my sake." His voice was full of a proud defiance.

"We will see! But here comes your charming lady-love now, so I shall leave you to 'make hay while the sun shines!' The lady will not be so smiling to-morrow."

CHAPTER II.

The numerous guests of Oaklands were assembled on the wide porch after tea, enjoying the fresh breeze, and amusing themselves in a variety of pleasant ways. Beatrice Duncan was certainly the loveliest of the happy group; the soft folds of her thin robes giving her a flaky, ethereal appearance, as she floated

around from one to the other; her hair taken back loosely from her face, and confined with a spray of jasmine; and a knot of violets on her bosom.

Reginald Lyle had good reason to be proud of her, and to love her. Her frank, artless manners, had quite won his heart, long before he was aware of it. But this evening he did not choose to make one of the pleasant party on the porch. Fairfax had insisted that he should remain absent long enough to give him an opportunity to relate his pretended misfortune. His friend's words had not shaken his confidence in Beatrice, yet a gloomy feeling, for which he could not account, oppressed him.

He wandered out into the garden and sat down under the lilac bushes. From his flowery retreat he could see his friends, and hear the hum of their voices. He saw Beatrice flit out into the yard, and gather her hands full of creamy roses and then disappear, and he knew she had carried them to her room. He felt how cowardly he had been, to submit to such a scheme as Fairfax had proposed, and wished himself safely out of it a hundred times over. What would Beatrice think of him, when she found he had tacitly deceived her? Would she forgive him for his contemptible part.

Meanwhile, Beatrice had carried the roses to her room, and woven them with the jasmine in her hair; pleased when she glanced in the mirror and saw how pretty she was looking, because she knew it would please Reginald, and her heart fluttered gladly at the thought. She ran down stairs joyously, expecting to find him ready to greet her, but he was not there.

She was surprised to notice that a sudden and painful silence fell over the group at her appearance, and her wonder increased as she saw more than one pair of eyes bent upon her in a manner half pitying, half curious. What did it all mean? She looked from one to the other inquiringly. As they noticed her look of embarrassment and distress, there was a lame attempt at conversation, but the fluent tongues had suddenly grown clumsy. Mr. Fairfax came to her relief—he was the only one who seemed to be perfectly at ease. He paid her some graceful compliment, offered her his arm, and together they promenaded up and down the white gravel walk.

"You noticed the pause that followed your arrival a moment ago, Miss Duncan? I see you are wondering at it now. We have heard bad news this evening—very bad news, concerning a dear friend of yours too. Shall I tell you?"

She looked up in a pained, startled way.
“Concerning a friend of mine, Mr. Fairfax?
What is it? Do not hesitate to tell me!”

“As well that I should tell you as any one I suppose, for you will have to know it, sooner or later. Our mutual friend, Mr. Lyle, has lost every cent of his magnificent fortune. Owing to some unlucky speculations, too tedious to relate, he is to-night a ruined man.” The speaker’s voice sounded quite grave and earnest.

“How sorry I am, and yet so very glad it is no worse. I was afraid some accident had befallen him. Where is he? I must go to him—he needs words of cheer and comfort now. Poor Reginald!” Her voice quivered, and her face, at first as white as her dress, flushed up painfully.

“You are too much excited; wait till you are calmer.” His low, authoritative voice kept her at his side, and they continued to walk on slowly and silently. Fairfax spoke first.

“Miss Duncan, I once knew a man who appeared to be the soul of honor. He was my friend. He met and loved a beautiful girl. She returned his affection, and they were betrothed. His future seemed a bright one, but the demon of suspicion took possession of him. He began to doubt the faith of the peerless creature he had won. He could not fathom the pure depths of her spotless soul. He believed she loved him for the sake of his wealth, that without it, he would be nothing to her. I tried to reason him out of this foolish belief, but in vain—nothing would satisfy him, but to test her love. At last to please him, I became the medium of his hypocritical plot. Do you comprehend me?”

He did not need to ask her. The red, burning spot in her cheeks—the proud, haughty flashing of her eyes, told how the iron had probed her heart. She spoke very quietly—

“I am not so blind as to fail to discover that you speak of Mr. Lyle. And this is his confidence in me—his estimate of my worth! I appreciate the delicate cowardice of his conduct, and must thank you for disclosing it, and at the same time, I do not undervalue the peculiar sense of honor that has prompted you to act at first a meddlesome, and afterwards a treacherous part. Good evening!”

She left him standing mortified and baffled in the path, and running lightly up to the porch, was soon apparently engrossed in a lively conversation. He had hoped to gain her confidence and her love, but his very duplicity had foiled him. It filled his heart with a bitter, wicked triumph though, to know

he had placed an obstacle in the path of Lyle’s happiness.

CHAPTER III.

All this long time, Lyle sat under the lilacs in an impatient, remorseful mood; watching with eager eyes the group in his view, and wishing the time would ever wear away. He saw Fairfax draw Beatrice’s arm in his own, and wander down the walk, and he knew almost the words he must be saying to her. He noticed the quick, frightened start that Beatrice gave, and he knew the falsehood had been told. His heart throbbed heavily—surely she would come to him, to assure him that her love was ever the same.

But the moments grew longer and drearier, and still she did not come. Then he saw her in the midst of her friends, laughing and jesting, and for the first time in his life he began to doubt her. He got up with a leaden, dead feeling in his heart, and walked through the flowery paths of the garden, thinking every moment she would see him and come. Could she be the mercenary creature Fairfax had thought her? He would not believe it. Her clear, ringing laugh grated unpleasantly on his ears—she could be gay when she believed he needed comfort.

He sauntered up to the porch, sad and miserable. Beatrice did not even turn her head when she heard him address a friend, and when at last their eyes met, hers were full of coldness and scorn. He said to himself, now that she thinks me poor, she no longer loves me. The thought was agony, and yet he wondered at his own blindness, in not having known it before. He was not handsome, he was not graceful, and why should she have loved him? He went into the parlor, and sinking into a chair, covered his face with his hands; trying to shut out Beatrice and all thoughts of her.

There was a light, airy step in the hall, and Beatrice entered the room, seemingly unconscious of his presence. She gave a start of well feigned surprise, as he looked up.

“Ah! are you here, Mr. Lyle?”

Mr. Lyle—always before it had been Reginald. He sprang up abruptly before her, determined to know the worst at once.

“Beatrice, do you know of my misfortune?”

He blushed for shame, at the dissimulation.

“I have heard.”

She toyed in a careless way, with the lace on her sleeves, not even raising her eyes to his face.

"It is a terrible thing to be a poor man, but ten thousand times worse to learn that with your riches, your dearest friends desert you."

"It must be."

Still the listless manner and averted gaze. He drew her almost fiercely to the window, where the faint light fell over them both. His face was livid with suppressed pain—

"Look at me, Beatrice! I am not a handsome man, I am not a fascinating man?"

She looked at him quietly and curiously, as if it were for the first time in her life.

"No, you are not handsome or fascinating—simply passable."

Her voice preserved its indifferent tenor, and her eyes fell to the floor in an absent, dreamy kind of way.

"It was not for my personal appearance that you loved me then; it was not *me* that you loved at all, but my paltry wealth. Oh Beatrice—Beatrice!"

The blood rushed in an angry torrent to her face, and her eyes seemed to burn him with their flames. But she was calm and self-possessed again in a moment.

"Since you have formed so flattering an opinion of me, I shall not contradict it."

"Beatrice, you have cruelly deceived me. I trusted in you, as I shall never again trust anything living. You have shaken my faith in the human race—I could not have believed you what you are. How you must have triumphed when I fell an easy victim to your skill. How you have flattered me up with sweet hopes and loving words, and all the while your heart was cold and false to me. How your very kisses bound me to you with their sweetness—to think that they were *bought* with the prospect of future magnificence. Take back your honeyed smiles, your false vows, fairest and yet most heartless of women. Oh! Beatrice, how I have loved you!"

He caught her up in his arms, covering her face with farewell kisses; his tears shining like dewdrops on the roses in her hair.

She jerked herself from him scornfully, her face hot and feverish.

"You forget yourself; you forget your own words, freeing me from all ties to you. You forget the broad chasm the world has placed between us—you forget that *you are a poor man!*"

She emphasized the last words bitterly, as if to impress them upon him.

"You have doubted me—you have trampled upon all the best and finest feelings of my soul. I give you back scorn for scorn, bitterness for

bitterness. Take this bauble, you may need it now."

She slipped the heavy diamond ring from her finger, and flung it at his feet, then bursting into a passion of tears, fled from the room.

CHAPTER IV.

Beatrice Duncan never paused in her mad flight, till she found herself in the cool, quiet depths of the orchard. It would be impossible to tell what she suffered now, and what she had suffered in all that torturing interview. She had not thought it would end thus; she had intended to punish him for his want of faith in her, but farther than that she had not intended to go. If she had known how grossly Fairfax had misrepresented Lyle's conversation, she would have gone back to him then, with her heart full of love and sorrow. But she did *not* know, and there was no undoing what had already been done. Reginald Lyle was hers no longer. He had wounded her feelings, and her pride and passion would not permit a reconciliation. It was almost midnight when she returned to the house. No one had missed her—they probably thought she had retired. She went to her room, and drawing out her desk, wrote:

"To think that after all I have said to you, Reginald Lyle, after the long months you have known me and read my soul, you should think me so base and depraved! I loved you, because I believed you a man of pure, unsullied honor; because I believed you had faith in my goodness of heart. I did not dream you possessed a soul so sordid that it tainted your very thoughts. I would have scorned so mean and idea. You have never loved me as you ought, or you would not have doubted my devotion. Had your treacherous friend performed his part of that mocking farce as he should have done, you would have had no reason to distrust me again. When he told me that falsehood, my first impulse was to seek you out in your trouble and sorrow, and tell you how doubly dear you were to me, because there *were* clouds hanging over you. Before I could obey that impulse, he told me of the pretty plot you had prepared to entrap me. I loathed him for his treachery; I *pitied* you for your weakness. Yet I did not intend to allow this to sever our future lives. I intended to torture you for awhile, as you deserved to be tortured, for your unfounded doubts, and then to throw off the hateful mask. But after all that has passed between us to night, it will be better for us to go separately through life. I

would not marry you now, unless I *knew* you had perfect trust in me. I do not give you up without regrets—you have been very dear to me, and I shall always think of you kindly. Farewell.”

She did not weep then; she was fearfully calm and quiet. But she kissed again and again the little locket containing his miniature, calling it many and endearing names.

Lyle read the letter through with a dreary hopelessness. He saw all that he had lost, and yet, with his fine sense of honor, felt that he deserved it. He did not know how doubly treacherous his friend had been to him. He plead some urgent business to his friends, as an excuse for an early departure from Oaklands.

He did not seek for an interview with Beatrice; he believed all attempts at a reconciliation would be in vain. If he had only gone to her then, while they were both calm, everything would have been explained. He did not see the white, wan face, that looked out at him as he departed, and perhaps it was as well.

Beatrice found that the beauties of Oaklands had vanished with Lyle. Her friends, one and all, united in pronouncing her a heartless flirt, for her conduct to him; yet she never vindicated herself by blaming Lyle, as she could justly have done; never let them see beyond the surface of her heart. The summer passed along drearily; she felt she would be glad to see the dead leaves, and yellow, sickly grass of autumn; the splendors of the summer mocked her with the past. Fairfax had watched her with increasing love and admiration; had tendered his heart and hand, and had been decisively and scornfully rejected. She shrunk from him with an innate feeling of fear and contempt.

It was August; sultry, drooping, panting August. The guests still lingered at Oaklands; it was too pleasant a retreat to be easily parted with. Beatrice sat idly and dreamily looking over the latest paper from the city. Suddenly her eyes filled with light, and her color deepened.

Reginald Lyle *had failed*. There was no doubt of it now; he was a ruined man. Beatrice must have been more than heartless, for a glad smile wreathed her lips, as she read of the downfall of the man who had loved her better than his own life.

She picked up a little slip of paper and wrote—

“You will not doubt me now, Reginald, when I tell you that I love you, and that I will

gladly share your life with you. Come back to me; I am lonely, lonely without you.

“BEATRICE.”

She did not wait long for a reply. Two days later, as she sat in the garden under the very lilacs where *he* had sat *that* evening, she heard the firm, well-known step on the walk. She knew before she fairly had seen him, that it was Lyle.

She went up to him quietly and gladly, extending her small, fair hand. He picked her up in his arms, kissing her tenderly.

“My precious Beatrice—my own true-hearted darling!”

That was all he said, yet as they walked together up the path, the past was forgotten and forgiven.

Later in the evening, there was a long, quiet talk in the parlor, and they both learned for the first time, how cruelly Fairfax had deceived them. There was perfect peace and harmony at Oaklands that night, and a week later, a quiet wedding, where the peerless and wealthy Beatrice Duncan, became the happy Mrs. Lyle.

Sophie's Influence.

BY FANNY TRUE.

"Will you be kind enough to write my name, in the centre of this white square? I'm sorry to trouble you to do it, but my eyes are dim, and I cannot do it nicely myself."

"Certainly," we replied; "so you are piecing a quilt;" and we took the album square from her hand.

"Oh no, it's for Mary Lyman's wedding quilt. She wants all the neighbors to contribute a square of their own dress-pieces, to remind her of old friends, when she is married and gone; so I found this commenced among poor Sophie's things, and thought I'd finish it. It's her work."

"It is a beautiful square," we remarked; "what a pretty harmony between this buff and blue."

"Yes, that buff was Sophie's dress, and it was so becoming to her, and—" the old lady turned abruptly from us, as though some startling thing claimed her attention at the window. Too well we understood the interpretation of this movement, so we quietly took the patch-work and went up to our room for pen and ink, to render the simple service.

Sophie was a stranger to us. We had never known her while living, and never seen her, save what the little wan, but cherished miniature on the parlor table, revealed to us of her form and features. But we knew her before long—knew her by a thousand little nameless associations and memories, that clustered around the old farm house.

Whether we wandered up, into the dim old garret, where stood the spinning wheel, still and useless, and the broad old cradle, dusty and untenanted, or peered into the deep dark closet where hung the drapery that had clothed her light figure, there was an ever present sense of hallowed memory; of the lost one before us. All about the little parlor were vivid mementoes, in the worsted lamp-mats, sketchings, scrap-book, and album, containing the written offerings of kind hearts.

Four years ago they laid her to sleep in the church-yard, and the tall, old-fashioned clock in the corner, ticked ceaselessly away the hours, one by one, but still that sense of loneliness remained. The little low lounge by the window was vacant; there was no Sophie with her sewing-basket and cheerful face to occupy it, but the mother sewed on, alone; and when the Sabbath morning came, and good Father Sawyer drove to the front door with "little

Kate" in the family chaise, there was no Sophie with her kind hands to shape the mother's bonnet, or adjust her shawl, preparatory to church going!

We felt like walking very softly when we went into the sitting-room, and sat down by the grieving mother, to whose heart her child's loss, was ever like a fresh-opened grave. We wanted to cover it with soft mosses, and sweet flowers; anything that should awaken a simile of the angel life she had entered upon.

But the great bereavement clouded every consolation, and we could only go out from her presence, with a prayer at our heart, that He whose hand had stricken, might be the one to bless and cheer her bowed soul.

There are many homes in this wide world, that owe their most refining influences to these tender associations, linked with departed ones; and that faith is beautiful and divine, that looks uncomplainingly up to God, blessing him for the bright brief life, that makes Heaven a dearer place—a home!

The Pet Squirrel.

BY LAURA J. ARTER.

"Ida, Ida, run here quickly, and see what I've got for you." The silvery notes of Herbert Harrell's voice fluttered out joyously, as he called to his little sister.

Ida dropped her rag-doll and scampered out on to the porch, the waves of rich blood rippling over her face like a flood of moss-roses. Her brother stood holding something in his hat, while his eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"What is it, Herbert? *Do* let me see! Oh dear! dear! if it isn't just the *sweetest* little squirrel I ever saw in all my life. Where *did* you get it—the wee, pretty thing? Mayn't I hold it just a minute—*please*, brother Herbert?"

Ida held out her hands coaxingly, and Herbert took the squirrel out of his hat very carefully, and gave it to her.

"Take care, and don't let it get away, Ida. It's the wildest thing you ever did see. I tell you I had a hard time to catch it! We boys were gathering nuts down at the beech tree in the hollow, when all at once I noticed that the nuts commenced rattling down from the tree, and looking up, I saw this little squirrel sitting there as happy as a king, holding the nuts in its paws and eating out the kernels. You've no idea how cunning it looked. Just the minute I saw it I told the boys we must have it, and I commenced climbing the tree; but it jumped from one branch to another, just as easily as I can walk across the floor, and seemed to dare me to get hold of it. But at last it got scared and run into a little hole in the top of the tree, and tucked itself up in the leaves. I expect it thought I couldn't find it, but I just reached my hand in and pulled it out, and brought it right home to you. Now you will never call me a bad boy again as long as you live, will you, Ida, after I've brought you such a pretty present?"

"Goody! goody! I'm so glad I don't know what to do!" said Ida. "It is really mine to *keep*, then, Herbert? O, thank you! *ever* so many times. Oh! I'm so glad." And she danced over the porch in her joy.

All at once she stopped, and her little face looked sad and sober.

"But, Herbert, it looks *so* scared, poor little thing! What if it should die? I'd be *so* sorry, because you know it would be very wicked to take it out of the woods where it was happy, and scare and starve it to death."

"Nonsense, sister Ida—no danger of its being scared to death, and we won't let it *starve*, for I know over so many things to give it. It will eat any kind of nuts and corn, and drink water; and then there's a tin cage in the garret, made on purpose for squirrels, with doors and windows, and a wheel that will turn round when it gets tired of doing

nothing and wants to run. So you see it is all right, after all. You girls are always so babyish about such things, though, and *never* know how to do anything right."

Herbert was really a good little boy, but he couldn't help wishing his sister had been a boy too, so that instead of playing with dolls, she could have been climbing around in the trees with him; and he liked very much to try to make his sister think that boys were smarter than girls.

Ida was so busy looking at the squirrel that she didn't pay any attention to him; so after he had strutted up and down the porch awhile, with his hands in his pockets, and his soldier cap set on one side of his head, feeling as if he must be quite as large and important as a man, he ran up to the garret and brought down the cage.

Ida clapped her hands with delight, when she saw the squirrel in its small house. It was the prettiest thing you ever saw, my little readers. Its hair was as soft as silk, and just the color of the little mice you see sometimes; and it had two bright eyes that shone like stars, and the daintiest ears and head, and four of the cunningest little feet, and a long bushy tail that it curled up over its head when it was eating. You've no idea how pretty it *did* look. Maybe some of you have pet squirrels of your own, if you have, you know all about them.

Ida's squirrel didn't seem to want to eat much. It was afraid of her, because it had always lived in the woods where no person could get to it. As soon as it saw Ida coming, it would run into the upper story of its cage, and she couldn't coax it to come down, though she tried very hard. Herbert told her it would come down the next morning, so she put the cage where the old cat couldn't get to it, and went to her supper.

They kept it for two days, but they couldn't get it to eat enough even to keep a squirrel alive, and they began to be afraid it would starve, sure enough. So one day Herbert put his hand in the cage and pulled it out, and fastened it up in the wheel, so that it couldn't get back again. It bit his finger till the blood came, and made him so angry he wanted to kill it, but Ida coaxed him not to hurt the dear little thing.

When they tried to put nuts between the bars of its cage, it would strike at them and try to bite them. Then it would climb up and gnaw at the wheel and try to get out, and growl if they even put their fingers close to it.

Herbert thought it was very funny to see it cut such tantrums, but Ida couldn't help feeling sorry for the poor animal; and all the time she was at school that morning, she couldn't keep her mind on her studies, for thinking how it acted and how much it wanted to get away. The more she thought of it, the more badly she felt, till at last she determined to go home and take the cage out in the orchard and let the squirrel loose. Then

if Herbert wanted to know what became of it, she could tell him it just got away from her.

But this plan didn't suit, for she knew that would be *acting a lie*, and her mother had always told her that it was just as wicked to *act a lie*, as it was to *tell one*. So she made up her mind to tell Herbert the truth about it. On their way home, she told him how wicked it must be, to take any live thing from its home, and fasten it up where it couldn't be happy and free.

Then she asked him if he didn't think it would be very cruel for some great giant to come along and carry them off, and fasten them up in a little dungeon, where they couldn't see anybody they loved, or hear the birds sing, or see the bright sunshine. She said she knew very well they couldn't be happy then, even if the giant *did* give them as much as they could eat, and that for her part, she wouldn't eat or do anything else to please him, and that she would bite him and hurt him if she could.

Herbert looked very serious, and after thinking about it awhile, he said:

"Well, Ida, I don't much believe I should like to be kept a prisoner, just to please some huge old monster, and I don't expect that poor little squirrel likes to be in a prison to please us; so we'll go home and let it out, if you say so, though I got it just to please you. *Boys* have something to do besides petting squirrels."

So the two children trotted along home, and Herbert carried the cage down to the beech tree and let the squirrel go. As soon as it found it was free, it darted off through the leaves as quick as you could think. How it did jump and scamper, it was so glad to be at liberty once more. It ran into

the beech tree and frisked around, and jumped from limb to limb, and curled up its bushy tail, and did so many funny things that the children laughed till they almost cried.

Then they took the cage and went back home again, both of them feeling very happy, because they knew they had done right; and my little readers know that the *good* are *always* happy.

The best of it all was, their father and mother found out what good children they had been. And two or three days afterwards, when they sat down to supper, Ida found one of the most beautiful doll's lying beside her plate. Its eyes were as black as jet, and its cheeks were as red as strawberries, and it had dark curly hair, and lips that looked like ripe cherries. Then it had on a white crepe dress trimmed in pink ribbon, and a pink silk scarf on its shoulders; and pinned on doll's dress was a little slip of paper that said:

"To Ida Harrell, from papa and mamma; because she is a good, loving little girl."

Then on Herbert's plate, was a penknife that had four of the sharpest blades in it, and every one of them shone like silver, and beside his knife was another slip of paper, saying almost what Ida's did. Oh! you'd better believe they were happy little children that night—happy because they had done right, and because they had such beautiful presents.

So you see that you ought always to be kind and loving to every thing and every body around you, for it will make you happier, even if you don't get any nice presents when you do right, as little Ida and Herbert did.

The unloved woman may have bread just as light, a house just as tidy as the other, but the latter has a spring of beauty about her, a joyousness, an aggressive, and penetrating, and pervading brightness, to which the former is a stranger. The deep happiness in her heart shines out in her face. She is a ray of sunlight in the house. She gleams all over it. It is airy, and gay, and graceful, and warm, and welcoming with her presence. She is full of devices, and plots, and sweet surprises for her husband and family. She has never done with the romance and poetry of life. She is herself a lyric poem, setting herself to all pure and gracious melodies. Humble household ways and duties have for her a golden significance. The prize makes the calling high, and the end dignifies the means. Her home is a paradise, not sinless, not painless, but still a paradise; for "Love is Heaven, and Heaven is Love."

The Beloved Wife.

Only let a woman be sure that she is precious to her husband—not useful, not valuable, not convenient, simply, but lovely and beloved; let her be the recipient of his polite and hearty attentions; let her feel that her care and love are noticed, appreciated, and returned; let her opinion be asked, her approval sought, and her judgment respected in matters of which she is cognizant; in short, let her only be loved, honored and cherished in fulfilment of the marriage vow, and she will be to her husband, and her children, and society, a well-spring of pleasure. She will bear pain, and toil, and anxiety; for her husband's love is to her as a tower and a fortress. Shielded and sheltered therein, adversity will have lost its sting. She may suffer, but sympathy may dull the edge of her sorrow. A house with love in it—and by love, I mean love expressed in words, and looks, and deeds, for I have not one spark of faith in the love that never crops out—is to a house without love, as a person to a machine; the one is life, the other mechanism.

The Sister.

The holiness of the heaven-implemented home affections seems to us to sanctify the world. The more we consider the love, the devotion, the self-sacrifice which faithful hearts offer to each other, the more are we struck with the worth and beauty of those endearing bonds which hold the great human family together. Blessed things are those Divinely-appointed relationships of life which supply strength and comfort to those who, without them, must be weak, helpless, and weary. The well-bound-up bundle of sticks and its single parts supply the best of similes. Relatives united together may cope with most of the difficulties of life: while, standing alone, there is scarcely one of its countless troubles that may not overwhelm them. Were we asked what should be counted the best blessing of our mortal existence, we should answer at once, "The relationships of life." Sorrowful indeed is the lot of those who stand alone in the world. All that is left for them is the drawing closer still to Him who has promised to be "a Father to the fatherless, and a Husband to the widow."

Among these dear and priceless relationships, that of the faithful sister stands out conspicuously. We are going to tell a little history that will illustrate our meaning better than any general observations. Once upon a time, as the old fairy tales used to begin, there were two sisters. They had been cradled in opulence; but reverses came. The mother, with her two

daughters, passed from affluence to poverty. This mother—delicate in constitution, and oversensitive in mind, stung with injuries and overwhelmed with grief, seemed like some frail bird supported only by a straw on the surging surface of the angry ocean.

What afflictions and what privations that mother and her two girls suffered passing through the trials that awaited them! Poverty is hard to bear, even by those who have served to it a life's apprenticeship; but when poverty stalks into dainty chambers, and turns its tenderly-nurtured inmates out of doors, what it takes away is felt as much as what it inflicts. The countless luxuries of affluent position drop off one by one, and destitution sweeps the floor and takes possession. Some of our readers will know from sad experience how quickly and surely ruin works when the resources of life are stopped. There is no cruise of oil or barrel of meal to last while the years of famine lag slowly on. After a while the mother nerved herself to act as one who loved her children, but she struggled with exhausted faculties. The efforts that strengthen and efforts that weaken are each as natural as they are opposite in their effects. The one elevates, the other enervates, until the sufferers are either lifted up in renewed power, or virtually crushed beneath the dust and ashes of their own anxieties and sorrows.

It makes us sorrowful to think upon the sorrows of this mortal life, more sorrowful still to know how are helpless women striving to escape from the iron hand of adversity laid heavily upon the shoulder. That iron hand grasps the poor victim as in a vice. The mother labored with mind and body, without rallying in spirits. That was a hard fight with the world through the years that brought her two children from childhood to girlhood, from girlhood to womanhood. Yet through all she had contrived to give them such education and accomplishments as were consistent with the station of life in which they had been born. The eldest of the two sisters was fair, well-formed, graceful, and delicate; the younger was gifted with remarkable beauty. They had now reached an age when an advantageous settlement in life seems its main question. Girls with good looks and good fortunes are prizes to be sought and sighed for. The love of one or of the other warms many a heart. Singly they attract, unitedly they are irresistible. The beauty of the family had many suitors, her elder sister was less favored; still both were heart-whole. By-and-by there came a sort of Eastern nabob:

he was not a hero of romance, certainly, but he was rich and generous, qualities that cover a multitude of sins. If you, my reader, are rich, you cannot understand the temptations which wealth offers to poverty, especially to the young, who value the beautiful things that it can buy so highly. You may scorn and make a football of a bonnet out of fashion, but think of it as it just comes from Paris, with a handsome face underneath it, and that face your own, and young and blooming with rosy blushes. A ring, a bracelet, a veil, a silk dress—ah! don't despise them as weak instruments in fixing a woman's destiny. And think, too, if you had a home close and stinted, and curtailed of all enjoyment—a home full of sorrowful memories and complainings, with little in it but care! care! care! trouble behind and trouble before, wanting this and wanting that—a home made dull by privations and dark with gloom, uncheered by hope and embittered by mortifications—and in this morose and moody spot somebody came to you with an offer of real gold, that glittered very much—real gold, we say, that could purchase house and grounds, and carriage, and jewels, and dresses—why, would there be any great wonder that these should be accepted at the cost of the two very, very small and simple words, "I will?"

But no hurry. Please not to jump at conclusions. Our younger sister had that refinement of feeling, that innate distaste for sordid and selfish things, that natural leaning to personal liking in accepting a husband, that instinctive preference for the smooth brow and the warm heart of youth in him from whom she was to accept "worship"—is not that strange word included in the marriage-vow?—she had, we say, so much leading of taste one way, and so much repelling back another, that in spite of house, carriage, and servants, jewels, brocades, and lace, the beauty who could scarcely undertake the expenditure of a pair of gloves refused the hand that could have bestowed upon her all the golden prizes of life.

Strange things turn up on the cards of our every-day existence. Who can tell what undeveloped thoughts lie hid at the bottom of that cave of contradictions, the human heart. Perhaps that poor, much-tried elder sister did not even guess how much she writhed under poverty and coveted luxury until she saw the long vista of indulgences opened out to the acceptance of her sister. Then it was that, considering all the privations to which her young life was condemned, she exclaimed in

bitterness of spirit, "Oh! if he had only offered himself to me!"

Sometimes the walls hear and the winds whisper the secret things that were never meant to meet mortal ear. Whether it was human tongue or some little bird of the air that carried the words to the rejected suitor, we can't say, but we can guess; at all events, they were words of destiny which worked their own fulfilment. Drawn on by gratitude and pushed on by pique, he transferred his devotion from the younger to the elder sister, and his hand was accepted as a prize in the great lottery of matrimony.

The *trousseau* was as much as the vainest heart could covet. The young wife received all that she had bargained for, and even more. There was no breach of the terms of the agreement. She had her house, her servants, her jewels, cash, and plate, her dresses and her trinkets. Was she happy? Her photograph, if you could see it, dear reader, would best answer that question. That down look, that compressed lip, that air of bitter dejection—all told of the secret disappointment of the feelings. No doubt there was ever before her the recollection that her husband would have preferred her sister; and that was a thought of gall and wormwood to the young wife. Besides, as we have said, her wealthy husband was far from being a hero of romance. Having nothing to desire, the excitement of bright hope was gone; and feeling how insufficient all these things were to satisfy the heart, she repined even in the midst of her own self-chosen brilliant destiny.

Three darling children were the fruit of this marriage; and then the young mother was taken from the possession of that splendor she had bought so dearly, after having enjoyed the purchase but a few passing years.

She died in time to escape a most unlooked-for change of fortune. Speculations had swallowed up the nabob's wealth like the great quicksands on the seashore, and stricken by the blow, it was not long before he was laid on his last earth-pillow by the side of his young wife.

Who now was left to shelter and protect those helpless children, who but a little time back had been looked upon as born to wealth and honor? In truth, there was no other resource but to take them to the little home which the mother had forsaken with such distaste. Blessed! thrice blessed! as we have said before, and would say a thousand times gain, are the relationships of life.

On the strength of those beneficent instincts of our nature, the three orphan little ones were received into the sheltering bosom of love. The mother of their own mother devotes to them the tender cares of her domestic experience. And the aunt? Ah! the aunt is at this moment practicing one of the highest heroisms of home.

In what way? it will be asked. Why thus: She has undertaken the appointment of daily governess, and with the funds thus obtained she is educating her little nephews. Morning after morning she returns to her duties, and evening after evening takes her way back to the little circle of her home, of which she is the comfort and the solace. Possessed of a person which excites general admiration, she has never been tempted into a mercenary marriage, preferring all the privations and toils of her own lot to the splendors of a position purchased at the price of vows to love which could not be taken without perjury.

Is not this one of the true *Héroisms* of Home?

Was it Murder, or Suicide?

BY T. S. ARTHUR.
IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

"Who is that young lady?"

A slender girl, just above medium height, stood a moment at the parlor door, and then withdrew. Her complexion was fair, but colorless; her eyes so dark, that you were in doubt, on the first glance, whether they were brown or blue. Away from her rather high forehead and temples, the chestnut hair was put far back, giving to her finely cut and regular features a more intellectual cast. Her motions were easy, yet with an air of reserve and dignity.

The question was asked by a visitor who had called a little while before.

"My seamstress," answered Mrs. Wykoff.

"Oh!" The manner of her visitor changed. How the whole character of the woman was expressed in the tone with which she made that simple ejaculation. Only a seamstress! "Oh! I thought it some relative or friend of the family."

"No."

"She is a peculiar looking girl," said Mrs. Lowe, the visitor.

"Do you think so? In what respect?"

"If she were in a different sphere of life, I would say that she had the style of a lady."

"She's a true, good girl," answered Mrs. Wykoff, "and I feel much interested in her. Her father was, at one time, in excellent circumstances."

"Ah!" With a slight manifestation of interest.

"Yes, and she's been very well educated."

"And ridden in her own carriage, no doubt. It's the story of two-thirds of your sewing girls." Mrs. Lowe laughed in an unsympathetic, half contemptuous way.

"I happen to know that it is true in Mary Carson's case," said Mrs. Wykoff.

"Mary Carson. Is that her name?"

"Yes."

"Passing from her antecedents, as the phrase now is, which are neither here nor there," said Mrs. Lowe, with a coldness, almost coarseness of manner, that shocked the higher tone of Mrs. Wykoff's feelings, "What is she as a seamstress? Can she fit children?—little girls like my Angela and Grace?"

"I have never been so well suited in my life," replied Mrs. Wykoff. "Let me show you a delaine for Anna which she finished yesterday."

Mrs. Wykoff left the room, and returned in a few minutes with a child's dress in her hand. The ladies examined the work on this dress with practised eyes, and agreed that it was of unusual excellence.

"And she fits as well as she sews?" said Mrs. Lowe.

"Yes. Nothing could fit more beautifully than the dresses she has made for my children."

"How soon will you be done with her?"

"She will be through with my work in a day or two."

"Is she engaged for any where else?"

"I will ask her, if you desire it."

"Do so, if you please."

"Would you like to see her?"

"It's of no consequence. Say, that I will engage her for a couple of weeks. What are her terms?"

"Seventy-five cents a day."

"So much. I've never paid over sixty-two and-a-half."

"She's worth the difference. I'd rather pay her a dollar a day than give some women I've had, fifty cents. She works faithfully, in all things."

"I'll take your word for that, Mrs. Wykoff. Please ask her if she can come to me next week; and if so, on what day."

Mrs. Wykoff left the room.

"Will Monday suit you?" she asked, on returning.

"Yes; that will do."

"Miss Carson says that she will be at your service on Monday."

"Very well. Tell her to report herself bright and early on that day. I shall be all ready for her."

"Hadh't you better see her, while you are here?" asked Mrs. Wykoff.

"O no. Not at all necessary. It will be time enough on Monday. Your endorsement of her is all-sufficient."

Mrs. Lowe, who had only been making a formal call, now arose, and with a courteous good morning, retired. From the parlor, Mrs. Wykoff returned to the room occupied by Miss Carson.

"You look pale this morning, Mary," said the lady as she came in. "I'm afraid you are not as well as usual."

The seamstress lifted herself in a tired way, and drew in a long breath, at the same time holding one hand tightly against her left side. Her eyes looked very bright as they rested, with a sober expression, on Mrs. Wykoff. But she did not reply.

"Have you severe pain there, Mary?" The voice was very kind; almost motherly.

"Not very severe. But it aches in a dull way."

"Hadh't you better lie down for a little while?"

"O no—thank you, Mrs. Wykoff." And a smile dited over the girl's sweet, sad face; a smile that was meant to say—"How absurd to think of such a thing!" She was there to work, not to be treated as an invalid. Stooping over the garment, she went on with her sewing. Mrs. Wykoff looked at her very earnestly, and saw that her lips were growing colorless; that she moved them in a nervous way, and swallowed every now and then.

"Come, child," she said, in a firm tone, as she took Miss Carson by the arm. "Put aside your work, and lie down on that sofa. You are sick."

She did not resist; but only said—

"Not sick, ma'am—only a little faint."

As her head went heavily down upon the pillow, Mrs. Wykoff saw a sparkle of tears along the line of her closely shut eyelids.

"Now don't stir from there until I come back," said the kind lady, and left the room. In a little while she returned, with a small

waiter in her hand, containing a goblet of wine sangaree and a biscuit.

"Take this, Mary. It will do you good."

The eyes which had not been unclosed since Mrs. Wykoff went out, were all wet as she opened them.

"Oh, you are so kind!" There was gratitude in her voice. Rising up, she took the wine, and drank of it like one athirst. Then taking it from her lips, she sat, as if noting her sensations.

"It seems to put life into me," she said, with a pulse of cheerfulness in her tones.

"Now eat this biscuit," and Mrs. Wykoff held the waiter near.

The wine drank and the biscuit eaten, a complete change in Miss Carson was visible. The whiteness around her mouth gave place to a ruddier tint; her face no longer wore an exhausted air; the glassy lustre of her eyes was gone.

"I feel like myself again," she said, as she left the sofa, and resumed her sewing chair.

"How is your side now?" asked Mrs. Wykoff.

"Easier. I scarcely perceive the pain."

"Hadh't you better lie still awhile longer?"

"No ma'am. I am all right now. A weak spell came over me. I didn't sleep much last night, and that left me exhausted this morning, and without any appetite."

"What kept you awake?"

"This dull pain in my side for a part of the time. Then I coughed a good deal; and then I became wakeful and nervous."

"Does this often occur, Mary?"

"Well—yes, ma'am—pretty often of late."

"How often?"

"Two or three times a week."

"Can you trace it to any cause?"

"Not certainly."

"To cold?"

"No, ma'am."

"Fatigue?"

"More that than anything else, I think."

"And you didn't eat any breakfast this morning?"

"I drank a cup of coffee."

"But took no solid food."

"I couldn't have swallowed it, ma'am."

"And it's now twelve o'clock," said Mrs. Wykoff, drawing out her watch. "Mary! Mary! This will not do. I don't wonder you were faint just now."

Miss Carson bent to her work and made no answer. Mrs. Wykoff sat regarding her for

some time with a look of human interest, and then went out.

A little before two o'clock there was a tap at the door, and the waiter came in, bearing a tray. There was a nicely cooked chop, toast, tea, some fruit and a custard.

"Mrs. Wykoff said, when she went out, that dinner would be late to-day, and that you were not well, and musn't be kept waiting," remarked the servant, as he drew a small table towards the centre of the room, and covered it with a white napkin.

He came just in time. The stimulating effect of the wine had subsided, and Miss Carson was beginning to grow faint again, for lack of food.

It was after three o'clock, when Mrs. Wykoff came home, and half past three before the regular dinner for the family was served. She looked in, a moment, upon the seamstress, saying as she did so—

"You've had your dinner, Mary?"

"O yes, ma'am, and I'm much obliged," answered Miss Carson, a bright smile playing over her face. The timely meal had put new life into her.

"I knew you couldn't wait until we were ready," said the kind-hearted, thoughtful woman," and so told Ellen to cook you a chop, and make you a cup of tea. Did you have enough?"

"O yes, ma'am. More than enough."

"You feel better than you did, this morning?"

"A great deal better. I'm like another person."

"You must never go without food so long again, Mary. It is little better than suicide for one in your state of health."

Mrs. Wykoff retired, and the seamstress went on with her work.

At the usual hour, Mary Carson appeared on the next morning. Living at some distance from Mrs. Wykoff's, she did not come until after breakfast. The excellent lady had thought over the incident of the day before, and was satisfied that, for lack of nutritious food at the right time, Mary's vital forces were steadily wasting, and that she would, in a very little while, destroy herself.

"I will talk with her seriously about this matter," she said. "A word of admonition may save her."

"You look a great deal better this morning," she remarked, as she entered the room where Mary was sewing.

"I haven't felt better for a long time," was the cheerful answer.

"Did you sleep well last night?"

"Very well."

"Any cough?"

"Not of any consequence, ma'am."

"How was the pain in your side?"

"It troubled me a little when I first went to bed, but soon passed off."

"Did you feel the old exhaustion on waking?"

"I always feel weak in the morning; but it was nothing, this morning, to what it has been."

"How was your appetite?"

"Better. I eat an egg and a piece of toast, and they tasted good. Usually, my stomach loathes food in the morning."

"Has this been the case long?"

"For a long time, ma'am."

Mrs. Wykoff mused for a little while, and then asked—

"How do you account for the difference this morning?"

Miss Carson's pale face became slightly flushed, and her eyes fell away from the questioning gaze of Mrs. Wykoff.

"There is a cause for it, and it is of importance that you should know the cause. Has it been suggested to your mind?"

"Yes, ma'am. To me the cause is quite apparent."

They looked at each other for a few moments in silence.

"My interest in you prompts these questions, Mary," said Mrs. Wykoff. "Speak to me freely, if you will, as to a friend. What made the difference?"

"I think the difference is mainly due to your kindness yesterday.—To the glass of wine and biscuit when I was faint, and to the early and good dinner, when exhausted nature was crying for food. I believe, Mrs. Wykoff"—and Mary's eyes glistened—"that if you had not thought of me when you did, I should not be here to day."

"Are you serious, Mary?"

"I am indeed, ma'am. I should have got over my faint spell in the morning, even without the wine and biscuit, and worked on until dinner time; but I wouldn't have been able to eat anything. It 'most always happens, when I go so long without food, that my appetite fails altogether, and by the time night comes, I sink down in an exhausted state, from which nature finds it hard to rally. It has been so a number of times. The week before I came here, I was sewing for a lady, and worked from eight o'clock in the morning until four in

the afternoon, without food passing my lips. As I had been unable to eat anything at breakfast time, I grew very faint, and when called to dinner, was unable to swallow a mouthful. When I got home in the evening I was feverish and exhausted, and coughed nearly all night. It was three or four days before I was well enough to go out again."

"Has this happened, in any instance, while you were sewing for me?" asked Mrs. Wykoff.

Miss Carson dropped her face, and turned it partly aside; her manner was slightly disturbed.

"Don't hesitate about answering my question, Mary. If it has happened, say so. I am not always as thoughtful as I should be."

"It happened once."

"When?"

"Last week."

"Oh! I remember that you were not able to come for two days. Now, tell me, Mary, without reservation, exactly how it was."

"I never blamed you for a moment, Mrs. Wykoff. You didn't think; and I'd rather not say anything about it. If I'd been as well as usual on that day, it wouldn't have happened."

"You'd passed a sleepless night?" said Mrs. Wykoff.

"Yes, ma'am."

"The consequence of fatigue and exhaustion?"

"Perhaps that was the reason."

"And couldn't eat any breakfast?"

"I drank a cup of coffee."

"Very well. After that you came here to work. Now, tell me exactly what occurred, and how you felt all day. Don't keep back anything on account of my feelings. I want the exact truth. It will be of use to me, and to others also, I think."

Thus urged, Miss Carson replied—

"I'll tell you just as it was. I came later than usual. The walk is long, and I felt so weak that I couldn't hurry. I thought you looked a little serious when I came in, and concluded that it was in consequence of my being late. The air and walk gave me an appetite, and if I had taken some food then, it would have done me good. I thought, as I stood at the door, waiting to be let in, that I would ask for a cracker or a piece of bread and butter; but, when I met you, and saw how sober you looked, my heart failed me."

"Why, Mary!" said Mrs. Wykoff. "How wrong it was in you!"

"Maybe it was, ma'am; but I couldn't help it. I'm foolish sometimes; and it's hard for

us to be anything else than what we are, as my Aunt Hannah used to say. Well, I sat down to my work with the dull pain in my side, and the sick feeling that always comes at such times, and worked on hour after hour. You looked in once or twice during the morning to see how I was getting on, and to ask about the trimming for a dress I was making. Then you went out shopping, and did not get home until half past two o'clock. For two hours there had been a gnawing at my stomach, and I was faint for something to eat. Twice I got up to ring the bell, and ask for a lunch; but, I felt backward about taking the liberty. When, at three o'clock, I was called to dinner, no appetite remained. I put food into my mouth, but it had no sweetness, and the little I forced myself to swallow, lay undigested. You were very much occupied, and did not notice me particularly. I dragged, as best I could, through the afternoon, feeling, sometimes, as if I would drop from my chair. You had tea later than usual. It was nearly seven o'clock when I put up my work and went down. You said something in a kind, but absent tone, about my looking pale, and asked if I wouldn't have a second cup of tea. I believe I forced myself to eat a slice of bread half as large as my hand. I thought I should never reach home that night, for the weakness that came upon me. I got to bed as soon as possible, but was too tired to sleep until after twelve o'clock, and a coughing spell seized me, which brought on the pain in my side. It was near daylight when I dropped off; and then I slept so heavily for two hours that I was all wet with perspiration when I awakened. On trying to rise my head swam so that I had to lie down again, and it was late in the day before I could even sit up in bed. Towards evening, I was able to drink a cup of tea and eat a small piece of toast; and then I felt wonderfully better. I slept well that night, and was still better in the morning, but did not think it safe to venture out upon a day's work; so I rested and got all the strength I could. On the third day, I was as well as ever again."

Mrs. Wykoff drew a long sigh as Miss Carson stopped speaking, and bent down over her sewing. For some time, she remained without speaking.

"Life is too precious a thing to be wasted in this way," said the lady, at length, speaking partly to herself, and partly to the seamstress. "We are too thoughtless, I must own; but you are not blameless. It is scarcely possible for us to understand just how the case

stands with one in your position, and duty to yourself demands that you should make it known. There is not one lady in ten, I am sure, who would not be pleased rather than annoyed, to have you do so."

Miss Carson did not answer.

"Do you doubt it?" said Mrs. Wykoff.

"For one of my disposition," was replied, "the life of a seamstress does not take off the keen edge of a natural reserve—or, to speak more correctly—sensitiveness. I dislike to break in upon another's household arrangements, or in any way to obtrude myself. My rule is, to adapt myself, as best I can, to the family order, and so not disturb anything by my presence."

"Even though your life be in jeopardy?" said Mrs. Wykoff.

"Oh! It's not so bad as that."

"But it is, Mary! Let me ask a few more questions. I am growing interested in the subject, as reaching beyond you personally. How many families do you work for?"

After thinking for a little while, and naming quite a number of ladies, she replied—

"Not less than twenty."

"And to many of these, you go for only a day or two at a time?"

"Yes."

"Passing from family to family, and adapting yourself to their various home arrangements?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Getting your dinner at one o'clock to-day, and at three or four to-morrow."

Miss Carson nodded assent.

"Taking it now, warm and well served, with the family, and on the next occasion, cold and tasteless by yourself, after the family has dined."

Another assenting inclination of the head.

"One day set to work in an orderly, well ventilated room, and on the next cooped up with children in a small apartment, the air of which is little less than poison to your weak lungs."

"These differences must always occur, Mrs. Wykoff," replied Miss Carson, in a quiet, uncomplaining voice. "How could it be otherwise? No housekeeper is going to alter her family arrangements for the accommodation of a sewing girl. The seamstress must adapt herself to them, and do it as gracefully as possible."

"Even at the risk of her life?"

"She will find it easier to decline working, in families where the order of things bear too

heavily upon her, than to attempt any change. I have been obliged to do this in one or two instances."

"There is something wrong here, Mary," said Mrs. Wykoff, with increasing sobriety of manner. "Something very wrong, and as I look it steadily in the face, I feel both surprise and trouble; for, after what you have just said, I do not see clearly how it is to be remedied. One thing is certain, if you, as a class, accept, without remonstrance, the hurt you suffer, there will be no change. People are indifferent and thoughtless; or worse, too selfish to have any regard for others—especially if they stand, socially, on a plane below them."

"We cannot apply the remedy," answered Miss Carson.

"I am not so sure of that."

"Just look at it for a moment, Mrs. Wykoff. It is admitted, that, for the preservation of health, orderly habits are necessary; and that food should be taken at regular intervals. Suppose that, at home, my habit is to eat breakfast at seven, dinner at one, and supper at six. To-day, such is the order of my meals; but to-morrow, I leave home at half past six, and sit down, on an empty stomach to sew until eight, before I am called to breakfast. After that, I work until two o'clock, when I get dinner; and at seven drink tea. On the day after that, maybe, on my arrival at another house where a day's cutting and fitting is wanted, I find the breakfast awaiting me at seven; this suits very well—but not another mouthful of food passes my lips until after three o'clock, and maybe, then, I have such an inward trembling and exhaustion, that I cannot eat. On the day following, the order is again changed. So it goes on. The difference in food, too, is often as great. At some houses, everything is of good quality, well cooked, and in consequence, of easy digestion; while at others, sour, heavy bread, greasy cooking, and like kitchen abominations, if I must so call them, disorder instead of giving sustenance to a frail body like mine. The seamstress who should attempt a change of these things for her own special benefit, would soon find herself in hot water. Think a moment. Suppose, in going into a family for one or two days, or a week, I should begin by a request to have my meals served at certain hours—seven, one and six, for instance—how would it be received in eight out of ten families?"

"Something would depend," said Mrs. Wykoff, "on the way in which it was done. If

there was a formal stipulation, or a cold demand, I do not think the response would be a favorable one. But, I am satisfied that, in your case, with the signs of poor health or your countenance, the mild request to be considered as far as practicable, would, in almost every instance, receive a kind return."

"Perhaps so. But, it would make trouble—if no where else, with servants, who never like to do anything out of the common order. I have been living around long enough to understand how such things operate; and generally think it wisest to take what comes and make the best of it."

"Say, rather, the worst of it, Mary. To my thinking, you are taking the worst of it."

But, Mrs. Wykoff did not inspire her seamstress with any purpose to act in the line of her suggestions. Her organization was of too sensitive a character to accept the shocks and repulses that she knew would attend, in some quarters, any such intrusion of her individual wants. Even with all the risks upon her, she preferred to suffer whatever might come, rather than ask for consideration. During the two or three days that she remained with Mrs. Wykoff, that excellent lady watched her, and ministered to her actual wants, with all the tender solicitude of a mother; and when she left, tried to impress upon her mind the duty of asking, wherever she might be, for such consideration as her health required.

The Monday morning on which Mary Carson was to appear "bright and early" at the dwelling of Mrs. Lowe, came round, but it was far from being a bright morning. An easterly storm had set in during the night; the rain was falling fast, and the wind driving gustily. A chilliness crept through the frame of Miss Carson as she arose from her bed, soon after the dull light began to creep in drearily through the half closed shutters of her room. The air, even within her chamber, felt cold, damp, and penetrating. From her window a steeple clock was visible. She glanced at the face, and saw that it was nearly seven.

"So late as that!" she exclaimed, in a tone of surprise, and commenced dressing herself in a hurried, nervous way. By the time she was ready to leave her room, she was exhausted by her own excited haste.

"Mary," said a kind voice, calling to her as she was moving down stairs, "you are not going out this morning."

"O yes, ma'am," she answered, in a cheerful voice. "I have an engagement for to-day."

"But the storm is too severe. It's raining

and blowing dreadfully. Wait an hour or two, until it holds up a little."

"O dear, no, Mrs. Grant. I can't stop for a trifle of rain."

"It's no trifle of rain this morning, let me tell you, Mary. You'll get drenched to the skin. Now don't go out, child!"

"I must indeed, Mrs. Grant. The lady expects me, and I cannot disappoint her." And Miss Carson kept on down stairs.

"But you are not going without something on your stomach, Mary. Wait just for a few minutes until I can get you a cup of tea. The water is boiling."

Mary did not wait. It was already past the time when she was expected at Mrs. Lowe's; and besides feeling a little uncomfortable on that account, she had a slight sense of nausea, with its attendant aversion to food. So, breaking away from Mrs. Grant's concerned importunities, she went forth into the cold driving storm. It so happened, that she had to go for nearly the entire distance of six or seven blocks, almost in the teeth of the wind, which blew a perfect gale, drenching her clothes in spite of all efforts to protect herself by means of an umbrella. Her feet and ankles were wet by the time she reached Mrs. Lowe's, and the lower parts of her dress and under-clothing saturated to a depth of ten or twelve inches.

"I expected you half an hour ago," said the lady, in a coldly polite way, as Miss Carson entered her presence.

"The morning was dark and I overslept myself," was the only reply.

Mrs. Lowe did not remark upon the condition of Mary's clothing and feet. That was a matter of no concern to her. It was a seamstress, not a human being, that was before her—a machine, not a thing of sensation. So she conducted her to a room in the third story, fronting east, against the cloudy and misty windows of which, the wind and rain was driving. There was a damp, chilly feeling in the air of this room. Mrs. Lowe had a knit shawl drawn around her shoulders; but Mary, after removing her bonnet and cloak, had no external protection for her chest beyond the closely fitting body of her merino dress. Her feet and hands felt very cold, and she had that low shuddering, experienced when one is inwardly chilled.

Mrs. Lowe was ready for her seamstress. There were the materials to make half a dozen dresses for Angela and Grace, and one of the little Misses was called immediately, and the work of selecting and cutting a body pattern

commenced, Mrs. Lowe herself superintending the operation, and embarrassing Mary at the start with her many suggestions. Nearly an hour had been spent in this way, when the breakfast bell rung. It was sometime after eight o'clock. Without saying anything to Mary, Mrs. Lowe, and the child they had been fitting, went down stairs. This hour had been one of nervous excitement to Mary Carson. Her cheeks were hot—burning as if a fire shone upon them—but her cold hands, and wet, colder feet, sent the blood in every returning circle, robbed of warmth to the disturbed heart.

It was past nine o'clock when a servant called Mary to breakfast. As she arose from her chair, she felt a sharp stitch in her left side; so sharp, that she caught her breath in half inspirations, two or three times, before venturing on a full inflation of the lungs. She was, at the same time, conscious of an uncomfortable tightness across the chest. The nausea, and loathing of food, which had given place soon after her arrival at Mrs. Lowe's to a natural craving of the stomach for food, had returned again, and she felt, as she went down stairs, that unless something to tempt the appetite were set before her, she could not take a mouthful. There was nothing to tempt the appetite. The table at which the family had eaten remained just as they had left it—soiled plates and scraps of broken bread and meat; partly emptied cups and saucers; dirty knives and forks, spread about in confusion.—Amid all this, a clean plate had been set for the seamstress; and Mrs. Lowe awaited her, cold and dignified, at the head of the table.

"Coffee or tea, Miss Carson?"

"Coffee."

It was a lukewarm decoction of spent coffee grounds, flavored with tin, and sweetened to nauseousness. Mary took a mouthful and swallowed it—put the cup again to her lips; but they resolutely refused to uncloze and admit another drop. So she set the cup down.

"Help yourself to some of the meat." And Mrs. Lowe pushed the dish, which, nearly three-quarters of an hour before had come upon the table bearing a smoking sirloin, across to the seamstress. Now, lying beside the bone, and cemented to the dish by a stratum of chilled gravy, was the fat, stringy end of the steak. The sight of it was enough for Miss Carson; and she declined the offered dellenacy.

"There's bread." She took a slice from a fresh baker's loaf; and spread it with some oily looking butter that remained on one of the

butter plates. It was slightly sour. By forcing herself, she swallowed two or three mouthfuls. But the remonstrating palate would accept no more.

"Isn't the coffee good?" Asked Mrs. Lowe, with a sharp quality in her voice, seeing that Miss Carson did not venture upon a second mouthful.

"I have very little appetite this morning," was answered, with an effort to smile and look cheerful.

"Perhaps you'd rather have tea. Shall I give you a cup?" And Mrs. Lowe laid her hand on the teapot.

"You may, if you please." Mary felt an inward weakness that she knew was occasioned by lack of food, and so accepted the offer of tea, in the hope that it might prove more palatable than the coffee. It had the merit of being hot, and not of decidedly offensive flavor; but it was little more in strength than sweetened water, whitened with milk. She drank off the cup, and then left the table, going, with her still wet feet and skirts, to the sewing-room.

"Rather a dainty young lady," she heard Mrs. Lowe remark to the waiter, as she left the room.

The stitch in Mary's side caught her again, as she went up stairs, and almost took her breath away; and it was some time after she resumed her work, before she could bear her body up straight on the left side.

In her damp feet and skirts, on a chilly and rainy October day, Mary Carson sat working until nearly three o'clock, without rest or refreshment of any kind; and when at last called to dinner, the disordered condition of the table, and the cold, unpalatable food set before her, extinguished, instead of stimulating her sickly appetite. She made a feint of eating, to avoid attracting attention, and then returned to the sewing room, the air of which, as she re-entered, seemed colder than that of the hall and dining-room.

The stitch in her side was not so bad during the afternoon; but the dull pain was heavier, and accompanied by a sickening sensation. Still, she worked on, cutting, fitting and sewing with a patience and industry, that, considering her actual condition, was surprising. Mrs. Lowe was in and out of the room frequently, overlooking the work, and marking its progress. Beyond the producing power of her seamstress, she had no thought as including that individual. It did not come within the range of her questionings whether she

were well or ill—weak or strong—exhausted by prolonged labor, or in the full possession of bodily vigor. To her, she was simply an agent through which a certain service was obtained; and beyond that service, she was nothing. The extent of her consideration was limited by the progressive creation of dresses for her children. As that went on, her thought dwelt with Miss Carson; but penetrated no deeper. She might be human; might have an individual life full of wants, yearnings, and tender sensibilities; might be conscious of bodily or mental suffering—but, if so, it was in a region so remote from that in which Mrs. Lowe dwelt, that no intelligence thereof reached her.

At six o'clock, Mary put up her work, and, taking her bonnet and shawl, went down stairs, intending to return home.

"You're not going?" said Mrs. Lowe, meeting her on the way. She spoke in some surprise.

"Yes, ma'am. I'm not very well, and wish to get home."

"What time is it?" Mrs. Lowe drew out her watch. "Only six o'clock. I think you're going rather early. It was late when you came this morning, you know."

"Excuse me, if you please," said Miss Carson, as she moved on. "I am not very well to-night. To-morrow I will make it up."

Mrs. Lowe muttered something that was not heard by the seamstress, who kept on down stairs, and left the house.

CARTES DE VISITE.

These charming souvenirs, so popular with men and women of taste, are now sent to all parts of the country by mail at low prices. They are offered by an advertiser in this number of the magazine, at fifteen cents each, or eight for one dollar. See his advertisement. No finer photographs than his offers are made. If you wish to stock your Albums with portraits of celebrities, and copies of fine works of art, or to make tasteful gifts to your friends, here is an opportunity for doing so, at a moderate cost. Who may not now have miniature art gems in liberal abundance?

WORDS OF PRAISE.

The Lady's Book for November bears this flattering testimony to the character of our Home Magazine.

"ARTHUR'S HOME MAGAZINE.—We particularly call attention to the announcement of 'Arthur's Home Magazine for 1863,' to be found in this number. As we have often before said, it is, without controversy, the best two dollar magazine published in the country; and this is the strongly outspoken testimony everywhere given by the press. We know of no periodical that so well deserves the praise bestowed. The editors never tire in their efforts to give, each month, a rich and varied literary repast to their readers. Their work is kept fully up to the standard of their promise, is never dull, yet always full of instruction. We have often said, and repeat it again, that it should make a part of

the reading of every household. We know of no better educator of the people, young and old. Of the editors we need not speak; their names are household words all over the country. In their hands no periodical can fail to reach the highest point of excellence.

"OUT IN THE WORLD."

A new serial story, BY T. M. ARTHUR, with the title, will be commenced in the January number of the *Home Magazine*.

LLOYD'S MAPS.

Every one is asking at this time, for good maps of our country. J. T. Lloyd, 164 Broadway, New York, is furnishing them at cheap rates and in finished style. See his advertisement in this number. They can be sent by mail. So accurate is his great map of the Mississippi River (from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico) considered, that the government has ordered a supply for the use of officers. All these maps are on steel, and beautifully colored.

HOME MAGAZINE FOR 1863.

Our Prospectus for volumes XXI. and XXII. will be found on the cover. As heretofore, the *Home Magazine* will be conducted in the interests of morality and religion, those solid bases on which alone prosperity and happiness are built. It will, as heretofore, embrace all the varied themes of human interest, discussing them in essay, rhyme, or story; unfolding the true, and exposing the evil, that the beauty of the one and the deformity of the other, may be seen as in noonday light.

In the character, scope, and plan of the *Home Magazine*, no change will be made; but we shall labor for increased interest, usefulness and value in all its departments. The true worth of any periodical lies in the quality of its reading matter—not in its pictures and fashions, which are chiefly for the eye and taste, and have only a transient value—and herein we have ever striven for, and claim a solid merit. A volume of the *Home Magazine*, bound, and placed in the family library, will give an amount and variety of useful and entertaining reading for the home circle, scarcely to be found anywhere within a similar compass.

CLUBS FOR 1863.

We would suggest to those who design making up clubs for next year, to move early in the matter, and secure their lists of names. The earlier it is done, the easier the work will, in most cases, be found. If you delay, the answer to your application will, in too many cases be,—“I'm sorry! I meant to take 'Arthur's' next year; but I've just gone into a club for ———'s Magazine. I wish you'd come earlier.” Move early then, so that your good intentions fail not. Let us have at least the old number in every club. If you can increase it, so much the better.

For \$3.50 we send one copy of *Home Magazine*, and one copy of either *Lady's Book* or *Harper's Magazine*.

For \$3 we send one copy of *Home Magazine*, and one copy of *Saturday Evening Post*.

See Prospectus for 1863 on fourth page of cover; and notice of Premiums on second page.

a frame to form a hand-screen, in which case a pretty lining for the back, and a quilting of ribbon or deep fringe to finish the edge handsomely, will be necessary.

This comic design is also well adapted for a carriage-bag, in which case it would require a neat border round it, also of patchwork, but of sufficiently subdued colors not to interfere with the brilliancy of the central figures.

The ground color is of considerable importance in this kind of work, as, should too bright a tint be employed, the effect of the figures is quite spoiled. Black silk is not objectionable, but by far the best material that can be employed is gray glacé silk—that kind which is made of black and white woven together, but not a dyed gray.

The pattern should be carefully drawn or traced on a sheet of paper. And the worker is recommended to number the pieces, as in the copy, as a guide to the coloring.

Should further aid be necessary, it will be found useful to tint the pattern slightly with water-color, and then to proceed as follows:—

The piece in the corner marked with a cross X, should be cut out first, and covered carefully with the gray silk; a second piece should then be cut out, covered, and sewed to the first, before another is cut off. Proceed in this way until all the pieces are covered and sewn together. Observe that only one piece is to be cut from the pattern at a time, otherwise confusion would ensue, and the work be spoiled.

An experienced needlewoman will find no difficulty in executing this pattern, but those who attempt silk patchwork for the first time must be careful, when covering the pieces, to fold the silk exactly over the edge, neither leaving any extra space, or turning down any portion of the paper.

The following selection of colors is recommended; the numbers in the list refer to the proper places in the illustrated pattern:—

COMIC PATCHWORK.

Comic patchwork is a series of irregular geometrical figures, so combined as to form a representation of the human figure in various attitudes.

From the necessity of using angles more or less acute, in this kind of work, the figures have always a grotesque appearance. The design now described is one which, although presenting apparent difficulty in the execution, will be found perfectly practicable, if the directions given are carefully attended to.

The quantity of silk required to cover each piece is so small, that those who keep up a silk rag-bag will have but little trouble in assorting the necessary number of colors. But those who wish to execute this piece of work, and have no such resource at hand, are recommended to go to any respectable shop where they are in the habit of dealing, and to select one-eighth of a yard of each suitable ribbon, carefully saving the overplus for the next piece of work.

This design may be, when finished, stretched on

1. Background..... Gray glacé silk.
2. Faces, necks, hands Pink silk.
3. Young woman's hair Brown do.
4. Do. do. dress Purple do.
5. Do. do. feet Black do.
6. Do. do. hand-kerchief..... White do.
7. Do. do. stool Yellow do.
8. Old woman's bonnet Straw color.
9. Ribbon, curtain, do. Green do.
10. Old woman's shawl Plaid ribbon.
11. Do. do. gown Pale small-patterned silk.
12. Do. do. umbrella Dark blue silk.
13. Do. do. feet Black.
14. Do. do. chair Orange.

It will be evident that the sewing must be of the neatest description and done at the back. Should difficulty be found in procuring the requisite fineness of sewing silk, fine sewing cotton, Nos. 50 or 60 (not glacé), will answer very well.

The Fall of the Rossberg.

Amidst all the magnificence of Switzerland, there is nothing to surpass the grandeur of the scenery which encircles the summit of the *Rigi*, called the *Rigi Culm*. This mountain, situated near the lake of Lucerne, is not, however, so remarkable for its elevation, as for the singularity and advantage of its position. You might imagine that the Creator of all things had thrown up a standing place for the intelligent admirers of his works, in the centre of a vast amphitheatre, which is a kind of world in miniature, where beauty and sublimity occur in endless diversities, in continued alternations, and in eternal rivalry. From this point the spectator contemplates, on the one side, beneath his feet, the lakes and less mountainous regions of Switzerland, stretching like a map to the far distant horizon; and, on the other, a semicircle of the Alps, with their mighty breadth and snow-covered peaks. The day which we devoted to the ascent of the *Rigi*, was one of perfect serenity and clearness. Over all the azure skies not a cloud was to be seen; not a sound was to be heard; all nature seemed to repose in sunshine and stillness: so that fancy might have deemed it a scene for angels to light upon; a resting-place between heaven and earth!

A little below the Alpine ridges, was to be seen a streak of brilliant clouds, which lifted them to an apparent height far superior to their real elevation, bewildering the imagination with an indistinct impression of scenery, that partook of a kind of celestial character. What superadded to the effect was the circumstance of a small white cloud, occasionally detached from the fleecy girdle, and wafted by some gentle breeze along the pure and peaceful atmosphere.

There was, however, one spot which partook of a very different character from the rest. No mind endowed even with the common sensibilities of our nature, could survey it without emotions of melancholy interest, for it was the grave of multitudes who were suddenly precipitated into eternity, by the *fall of the mountain of Rossberg*; an event distinctly traceable in the long strip of dusty brown, which bespoke ruin and desolation; and exhibited, as seen from the *Rigi*, a striking contrast with the surrounding verdure and fertility. In travelling towards the town of Art, we had previously stopped to examine the effects of the catastrophe, and to indulge in those reflec-

tions upon the uncertainty of life which are always calculated to benefit the mind, and which such a melancholy prospect was calculated to inspire.

The valley, once rich and fertile, but now partly filled up with huge and scattered fragments of earth, stretched along from the southern extremity of the lake of Zug, to that of the lake of Lowertz, a distance of five or six miles. On one side, and in immediate proximity, the *Rigi* ascends to the height of about four thousand three hundred and fifty-six feet above the level of the lake of Lucerne; on the other, the *Ruffiberg*, or *Rossberg* (more familiarly called the *Roufli*), rises to about three thousand five hundred and sixteen. Both these masses belong to a chain of mountains, which, geologically considered, seem to have been formed of the fragments or debris, and rolled flints of the primitive mountains, which, being mingled with sand, or gravel and calcareous sediment, have formed those conglomerations which are technically denominated *Puddingstone*. In the neighborhood they are commonly called *Nagel-flur*, because they assume the appearance of a cement stuck all over with the heads of nails. It is obvious that from the nature of their formation, these masses can acquire no great solidity, and must be easily operated upon by the external elements, or by internal forces.

Little, if any doubt, can be entertained, that the *Rigi* and the *Rossberg* were originally one mass, which was torn asunder by some convulsion of nature, accompanied probably by an irruption of waters from the south. Convincing proofs of this pristine union were visible before the last catastrophe, both in the color and the direction of the rocky masses; and it should seem that even the whole valley of Art, now covered with verdure, woods, and orchards, formerly constituted a part of the lake of Zug.

The distance from Art to the village of Goldau, reckoning in the continental way, is about half an hour; whence was a distinct view of the lake of Lowertz, with its two beautiful islands. The valley then enlarges, and by travelling southward, you reach Busingen; thence coming round, to Lowertz, the road is frequently shaded by noble trees, the cottages decorated with vines, and the whole of this Arcadia with pastoral simplicity. Ruin, however, has continually been at work in this favored region. An old manuscript mentions the village of Rütten, which was built on that part of the *Rossberg* from which the portion of the mountain was separated in the last cata-

trophe, and which was destroyed by similar means.

Near the summit of the Rossberg, was a solitary thatched cottage (chaumière), the inhabitant of which was alarmed by an unusual noise in the mountain, about two o'clock in the afternoon of September 2d, 1806. Superstitiously attributing it to some malignant demon, he immediately ran to Art for a clergyman to appease the evil spirit. During his absence the moment of the explosion rapidly approached. His wife in the mean time happily escaped with her infant child in her arms, terrified by the repeated crushing sounds she heard, which were followed by the falling of stones and fragments of rock. In a moment, the cottage was swept away. Travellers who were proceeding from Ober-Art to Goldau, observed the top of the Rossberg in a state of agitation, while its trees and orchards appeared as if shook by some giant hand. The whole forest of Goldau was speedily overthrown with a tremendous crash. It was now five o'clock. The rapidity and force with which large masses of stone were driven to great distances can scarcely be imagined; we calculated that stones of no inconsiderable magnitude, were propelled at least an English mile, or perhaps half a league. Entire hills were thrown down, and others substituted in their stead, by the falling and rolling fragments. The lake of Lowertz was suddenly raised above its banks, by the displacing of a considerable portion of its waters; while houses and villages, with their peaceful inhabitants, woods, meadows, pasturages, all disappeared at once! The consternation which seized upon the whole country, and the immediate and agitated search of surviving friends after parents, children, brothers, sisters, and neighbors, can neither be described nor forgotten. The laughing valley became at once, and forever, a gloomy sepulchre!

It has been supposed, and with great probability, that the immediate cause of this calamity was long in preparation, by the gradual accumulation of water and rubbish in the interior of the mountain. This at length burst forth in a torrent of mingled mud and stone, which overwhelmed everything in its course, and rushed into the lake of Lowertz; while the woods and pastures on the surface suddenly sunk into the unoccupied chasm. This opinion derives support from the statement of some shepherds, published at Schwytz, in which they speak of having discovered a cavern, at a considerable height up the moun-

tain, the small opening of which was suddenly enlarged into the form of a prodigious arch. They add, that a collection of water was found within it, the extent of which they could neither explore nor fathom. At a greater elevation were several holes, into which, if a stone were thrown, there was found no reverberation; plainly indicating that the mountain was perforated in this manner to an unascertainable depth.

The extent of the mischief cannot, perhaps, be fully determined. The villages of Goldau and Busingen, with the hamlet of Hueloch, were covered with ruin; the same may be reported of the greater part of the village of Lowertz; while the loosened fragments rolled upon Unter and Ober-Röthen, and swept away a multitude of isolated habitations and buildings in the plain. The waters of the lake of Lowertz, being forced in the opposite direction to the descending mass, endangered the village of Seven, on the other side of the lake, and even destroyed a few houses. On the little islet was found a vast accumulation of wrecks; and in the village of Steinen a quantity of fish had been driven with the waves, and floated about the streets.

It has been calculated that nearly one thousand persons suffered by this convulsion of nature, which was rendered more melancholy by the sudden and surprising manner of its occurrence. Several gentlemen and ladies of distinction, who were at the instant crossing the bridge of Goldau, perished; while some of their companions, who had preceded them only a short distance, were saved. One or two remarkable escapes have been narrated, which there is reason to believe are authentic.

A servant at the village of Busingen fled into a barn; but the place of refuge soon afterwards became a perfect wreck. Providentially a beam was impeded by a fragment of rock, and thrown over his head in a slanting direction, so as to afford him an effectual protection from even the slightest injury. An infant at the breast was caught and borne along the surface of the agitated lake, till it was safely deposited in the neighboring meadow. Some persons went from Lowertz to extricate, if possible, a servant girl from a most perilous situation, in consequence of the house in which she dwelt being overwhelmed with the torrent of mingled mud and stone. She had separated and returned from the fugitive family, with whom she was attempting to effect her escape, to search for one of the children that was missing. At the moment of entering the house,

it seemed to be swept along with great rapidity; and scarcely had she reached the apartment where she hoped to find the object of her pursuit, ere she found herself in darkness, and, to her own apprehension, sinking into a deep chasm. The voice of the child was distinctly heard, but she was incapable of stirring from the place to afford assistance. Concluding that all was lost, she told the child it was the end of the world, that all aid was impossible, and nothing remained but patiently and submissively to wait for death. During this conversation they heard, indistinctly, the sound of the evening bell at the village of Steinen, which in some degree inspired the hope of deliverance. Throughout the whole night, however, they numbered every hour, which successively was deemed their last, till, at the break of day, her master, who had come to search for his wife, but only to find her a stiffened corpse buried in the mud, was enabled to extricate both servant and child from their imminent danger.

Eighteen Hundred Sixty-Three.

The old weaver at Timo's loom, whom we christen *Eighteen Hundred Sixty-Two*, has finished his work and passed away, and now there comes to the loom another weaver, and takes the old seat, and commences the old work, and his hand is strong with its young blood, and his face kindles with joy and inspiration as there rises before him in radiant vision the new patterns and devices which shall fill the days that are the warp with which he weaves.

And so, we stand in the dawn of another year. The last sound of the dirge has died upon the air, and the new ones have struck their joyful welcome the New Year that is born to all of us.

We stand in the new January and strive to peer with our human vision down that future which we see in a glass darkly! What gifts it has for us—what tidings of weal or woe, who shall rise up and proclaim; they are locked up in darkness and silence among its hours—the hours which will not come forth nor speak until their appointed time and utterance.

But reader, we know—you and I—that if it be ordained for us to walk down the path which leads straight and steady through all the days of this year, we shall find manifold slippery places, manifold rough passages and sharp corners, and bleak and tiresome crossings; and many pleasant ways, too, many spots carpeted with the cool green plush of summer grasses; many by-ways where sweet flowers will grow; many inns at which our souls shall lay down their scrip and staff, and take rest!

So the good and the evil will come to us, as the winter days; and the summer ones will come to this year; and as we cannot tell whether the rains or the sunshine most makes the buds to swell and the grass to sprout, so we cannot tell whether these other rains or sunshine will do most towards ripening our souls for that *Hereafter* for which they who are the children of our Father who is in Heaven do live.

Dear reader, we who stand in the birth-morn of the year, cannot tell where its death-night shall find us; but wherever it be, may it be nearer *Heaven*.

Let not our hearts fail us for fear! Of this one thing are we certain—the love and care of God, for those who trust Him! And let us make good, high earnest resolves of living and working on this New Year—resolves that shall go down into the humble and weak things of life, and exalt and sanctify them—resolves after a better, truer, more tranquil life—a life whose treasure shall be laid up where no “moth and rust of adversity” shall eat into them. And so, when the young weaver's shuttle has wrought up all the hours and days and weeks, and reached once more the pale warp of December, may it be well with us—well with us in the best sense, of something conquered, something achieved, something attained and lived in the year that has gone over us! So take once more from this right hand, and this weak pen, oh reader, then. “Be steadfast, be courageous and of good cheer!”

V. F. T.

The Test.

BY MRS. A. C. S. ALLARD.

CHAPTER I.

"We are coming home, mother, to spend thanksgiving with you; and who do you think comprises the *we*. Uncle Robert, cousins Florence, and Edith, and your own daughter, Elsie.

"I fancy you now, holding up your hands in surprise and delight; and hear you exclaim, 'Well, who would have thought it? Robert, coming to New Hampshire to spend thanksgiving with me;' and you need not shade your face, dear mother, to conceal those drops which overflow from the fountains of your loving heart.

"Uncle Robert talks of nothing else. He says he would 'make a pilgrimage from Kentucky to Europe, to spend one of those old-fashioned thanksgivings; such, as when the family all gathered around the old red brick hearth. Ah, that old brick hearth,' he says,

possessed a greater charm than the marble ones of his own luxurious home.

"A man's heart often gets heavy with his purse, Ellie," he said to me one evening, as he was talking of the days when he used to go to school in the old red school-house, at the foot of the hill.

"Uncle Robert has one of those natures which retain, and sets apart as holy, those portions of life which are interwoven with the emotions of the heart. He is never weary of talking of the places which he and Esther must visit; the old grave-yard; grandfather's orchard; and the spring in the rock, around which, he says, you used to gather violets; and knowing Uncle Robert, mother, you will not be surprised, when I tell you that his eyes filled with tears when I told him that the old walnut, which used to hang over the rock, had been cut down.

"How I admire a man of that fine texture, which gathers all the little shining pearls of feeling, which men of course would suppose belong only to women.

"I have prepared a little surprise for him, mother. He supposes that Elder Austin, who was in the prime of life when he left Clayton, twenty years ago, dead; and I have not undeceived him. Now, mother, what I have planned, is to have Elder Austin at our thanksgiving dinner; what will Uncle Robert say? How I long for the time when I shall again form one of your group; for although to one of my æsthetic temperament, the luxury, harmony, and grandeur of Uncle Robert's princely Kentucky home, is like the odor of flowers to the olfactories, and my love of the beautiful is daily banqueted, how wisely it is arranged, that even these acknowledge the supremacy of the heart.

"Tell Alice to practice in her music every day until we arrive. I want my aristocratic, but warm-hearted, Southern cousins, to see that the anemones that bloom among the granite hills, are not in any respect inferior to the regal southern dahlias.

"I have a secret for your ear, mother, which I would rather trust my pen than my lips to communicate, for then you will not see the color, which I feel now, burning in my cheeks. That presence, which is to woman's heart as the sunrise to the morning, illuminating and glorifying, awakening rich flowers whose petals were closed in the darkness, has arisen upon my life, and singing birds exult in the dawn, as the songsters welcome the blush of aurora, which heralds her lover approach.

"If I did not know the fineness of your nature, dear mother, I should not say this to you; but, although time has bleached the darkness from your hair, your youthful sympathies have bloomed beyond his power; and I feel that your own heart will pulsate more deeply and richly, for the great thrill of happiness which is trembling in your child. This is all I will tell you, until again in my New England home, and then you shall hear all.

"Uncle Robert has come in where I am writing, and says, 'Tell Esther to send her carriage to the depot, at the hour the morning train arrives; for Providence favoring, we shall all be there, without fail;' and until then, no more from your absent ELLIE."

Mrs. Cloud perused the above letter with a face of light and shade; her features were not exquisitely symmetrical, but fair and fine-toned; it was a ripe face, and you felt, gazing upon it, that the rain and sunshine which had fallen in upon the fifty years of her life, had matured the vintage of her soul and mind, until the bright clusters of thought and feeling hung rich and purple in the arbors of her spirit.

In reading the latter part of Ellie's letter, with the sympathetic joy she felt for her daughter, blended a fear that sorrow might be in store for her finely wrought, sensitive child. She knew that Ellie's heart had not been easily won; and, that when embarking upon the rosy waters upon which she was now sailing, that she had freighted her bark with all the pearls of her young life's gathering; and she felt how entirely happiness would be wrecked, should the rich freight go down beneath the waves of disappointment.

But she did not muse long; a visit from an only brother, whom she had not seen for ten years, was too great an event for her mind to remain in a contemplative state; and she read to the family who were waiting with expectant faces, the portion of Ellie's letter relative to the visit; the effect was electric.

"Guess who's coming!" exclaimed Charlie, a blue-eyed, curly-head, of eight, to his older and more sedate brother, Edwin, who, with satchel in hand, just came in from school. "Uncle Robert is coming home with sister Ellie, in two weeks; and I shouldn't wonder if he brought me a whole boxful of presents."

"I hope he will, Charlie, and then you will share with me, wont you?" but master Charlie not considering his brother's sympathy as unselfish as became an older brother, ran off to

find among his playfellows a group to dazzle with his brilliant expectations.

At length the last day of the two weeks, which formed the gulf between the meeting of the friends, arrived; and before the starry regiments retreated from the triumphal banners of light, the Cloud family were stirring; and the cackling of chickens, rattling of dishes, grinding of spices, and beating of eggs, gave evidence that the grand thanksgiving dinner siege had begun.

"Shall I make the pumpkin pies," Mrs. Cloud? called the girl, to that lady, who had gone into the cellar to put away the mince pies and fruit cake.

"Not for the world, Eunice! get the cream, milk, spices and eggs ready; but Robert must have just such a piece of pie for his dinner as mother used to make. You can make the dressing for the turkey, and the floating island, but I know just the taste brother will expect the pumpkin pie to have. You see, Eunice," apologized Mrs. Cloud, "mother's pumpkin pies were considered the best in the neighborhood; and a piece like hers will make our thanksgiving dinner to-day, seem more like the last one he spent with us, when father sat at the head of the table, and mother was in her seat; but they will both be vacant to-day;" and a tear lighted, with its soft brilliance, the mellow eyes of Mrs. Cloud.

"Mother, can you leave now? it is ten, and they will be here at eleven," vibrated the sweet, gentle voice of Alice Cloud, as she came to the dining-room door, where her mother was helping to arrange the table.

"Yes, in a few minutes, Alice; everything is doing so well; the turkey is a beautiful russet, and so tender; the cakes are perfect; and the jar of currant jelly which I opened this morning, is as bright and clear as a ruby. I never had better luck with mince and pumpkin pies; and now, Eunice, if you think you can manage, I will prepare to receive them!" and she followed her daughter to her dressing-room.

"What shall I wear, Alice?"

"Your brown merino, mother; let me baste this strip of edging around the neck; and if you have nothing more for me to do, I will go and dress, for there goes the carriage to meet them at the depot. Oh, mother, I am such a plain, unpolished girl, that I am afraid my brilliant, beautiful cousins will hardly think me worth their notice."

"Just be yourself, my dear," replied Mrs.

Cloud, as she looked after the fawn-like girl, with her spiritual face and delicate figure.

"The carriage is coming, mother! they are coming," shouted Charlie, an hour later, as with cap in hand, he came flying down stairs.

"I saw them from the corner-room window!"

"Are you sure, Charlie?" Mrs. Cloud tried to speak steadily, but there was a nervous haste in her words; but the boy was out of hearing, and the family, who assembled upon the broad door-step, caught a glimpse of the carriage as it came around a bend in the road, a quarter of a mile distant. Mrs. Cloud quickly stepped into the parlor:—

"Now, Father Austin, retire into that room, and I will come in when dinner is ready, and take you into the dining-room by another door."

"There is Ellie, looking from the carriage window, bowing and smiling," said Alice, her violet eyes humid with joy.

The carriage stopped; a gentleman with dark hair, threaded with silver, stepped out and approached Mrs. Cloud. At first, she could not recognize him as the brother whom she had seen ten years before, with the lustre upon his dark brown hair; but the same eyes were there, reflecting the same soul, and with a voice which broke in a sob, she pronounced her brother's name; "Robert;" "Esther;" for some moments no other words were spoken. At length the greetings were over, and Alice was taken quite by surprise at the warmth with which her cousins embraced her.

"She is a perfect spirituelle!" said Florence to Edith, as soon as they were alone. "I had not expected to admire her as much as Cousin Ellie; but her nature is a delicate mezzotint, while Ellie's is richly colored."

The dinner hour arrived, and when each had been assigned his place at the table, the old pastor quietly entered, and extending his hands, asked a blessing upon the meal before them.

Robert Ashley listened in bewilderment; and when it was concluded, looked inquiringly at Mrs. Cloud.

"Don't you know Elder Austin?" asked Mrs. Cloud.

"Not our old minister, Esther? I heard that he was dead, five years ago."

"The same, Robert, who gave to you this hand twenty-five years ago, when you became a member of our church," replied the venerable old man, as he extended his hand; but tears were choking the utterance of both; and the

illence, which is more powerful than words, was not broken, until the wave of emotion again returned to the depths of feeling.

"This is next to seeing my own father here," remarked Mr. Ashley's voice. "Among all his pleasures anticipated, I had not expected this."

"Your father has taken a higher seat, Robert, and I am only waiting among the trees, in the evening, to hear the voice of my Lord calling me," replied the old pastor, as he stood there, wearing upon his brow the benediction of a peaceful spirit.

Mrs. Cloud was amply repaid in her efforts to make her dinner puritanic in its character, by her brother's keen appreciation of everything which reminded him of thanksgiving at the homestead; and when it was over, he expressed a belief of having been plunged into the fabulous fountain of youth; as he could by no other means, have slipped back twenty-five years of his life, which this dinner being a reality, he must have done he said.

"The fountain has not taken the silver breeding from your hair, father," said Florence.

"No, but it has washed some of the indentations of care from my heart, my dear; and now, girls, get your hats, and if Ellie and Alice will go with us, I will take you to the old stone house where I was born."

CHAPTER II.

Ellie Cloud was a true New Hampshire girl. Born and reared among the granite hills, whose pure air imparts that tinge to the clear cheek, which is sometimes found upon the enamel of shells. She had one of those symmetrical natures seldom found; uniting the practical and imaginative; a combination which is becoming so rare among the people of the nineteenth century.

We are cultivating one or two branches upon the tree of life, throwing into them all the sap of existence, while the other boughs are neglected; and, as a result, there are but few characters, when viewed upon all sides, whose disproportion does not painfully meet the eye.

Ellie's nature was happily an exception; over the base of the practical and useful, ran the graceful foliage which composed the æsthetic temperament. Ardent in her feelings, she embraced with her whole heart, every cause of which she became the friend.

Her visit at her uncle's was during the last presidential campaign, when a strong wave of

feeling was surging from the gull to the ro-tomac. But Ellie had lived too near Bunker Hill, to hear whispers of "disunion" without a thrill of indignation.

She had met, while at her uncle's, a gentleman just returned from a northern college, Walter Talcott, a young man of great promise and personal attraction; and Ellie Cloud, who had never before seen one to whom she felt she could yield unconditional homage, acknowledged her heart a conquered province, and Walter Talcott its conqueror.

The last month spent at her uncle's, while she was wearing upon her finger that "round hoop of gold," in which was encircled the hopes of a whole life to her, was a blissful, enchanted dream. Sleeping or waking, the anthem of her heart thrilled its music. How she longed to tell her mother and Alice of the idol which she had set up in her heart; and the evening following their arrival at her home, after their guests retired, the three sat alone by the fire, and while its light mingled with the blushes upon her face, she described to them her first meeting with Mr. Talcott, and closed the narration, by holding up in the flickering light, the betrothal ring.

"It is a diamond!" said Alice, with an eye to its pecuniary, as well as spiritual significance. "Is he wealthy? this ring is trying to dazzle me into that belief."

"Yes, very; but you know, Alice, that, with me, is an *accidental*, rather than an *essential* circumstance of exalted manhood."

Alice smiled.

"Yes, or the rich Boston merchant would not have left with such a cloud upon his handsome face, Ellie."

* * * * *

"Fort Sumter is taken!" Ellie Cloud heard this first mutter of the distant thunder of war, as it came echoing from Carolina; the herald that the fearful storm of blood was near; and all the energy and sympathy of her nature was aroused in behalf of her country; and with this deep emotion, blended a thought of her lover. She was eager to see him step forward and lend his endowments to the support of that cause, upon which hung the hopes of the oppressed of the nations of the earth.

Since the land had arisen to rush to the rescue, she had not received a line from Walter; and a vague fear of the cause of his silence, which she would not, dared not give form, darkened her spirit's horizon.

The glorious May had returned to her forest palaces, and was hanging up through their

grand old halls their rich green drapery. Ellie was standing by the window of her chamber, inclining the honeysuckle vine, its green lace work tempering so pleasantly the sunlight which fell through its meshes, when Charlie peeped into her room holding up to her view a letter, whose direction was in the familiar hand.

"Oh, Charlie!" and she sprang to take it; but that young hopeful made a hasty retreat half way down the stairs, where he halted, "awaiting another advance of the enemy."

"Now, Ellie, you can have this when you promise to make that soldier's cap that you said you hadn't time to make this morning, and sew the stars on my flag."

"I'll make the cap; Charlie; but I haven't time to sew on the stars."

"And I haven't time to stand here;" and at three leaps, Charlie was down stairs.

"Come back, Charlie! I'll get Jennie Hall to sew them on."

"This very afternoon?" exacted Charlie.

"Yes, this very afternoon. Now give me my letter, quick," and, in her impatience, she ran half way down the stairs.

She tore apart the envelope, with fingers which trembled with excitement, and glanced swiftly and eagerly over the lines; she was bewildered, and made an effort to read it again; but the letters seemed blurred, and with the heavy pressure under her brow she doubted whether she had comprehended it. She handed it to her sister, "Read it to me, Alice, I cannot understand it; and Alice, who did not observe the expression upon Ellie's face, read:—

"CAMP DIXIE, MAY, '61.

"DEAR ELLIE:—You will see by this, that I have not listened, unmoved, to the appeal of a people of too much spirit to bear longer the indignities heaped upon them by a portion of the North. I remember, Ellie, that you once remarked to me, that you would not marry a man in whose veins ran a drop of disloyal blood; but knowing how much you admire that spirit which will not submit to encroachment, I even yet trust that you will reconsider the assertion to which I have alluded, and which neither of us then supposed would be put to so severe a test.

"Hoping that if you cannot sympathize in our cause, you will at least not condemn me, I remain your own

WALTER."

Alice did not speak when she had finished the letter; no word seemed appropriate. She knew by the white, compressed lips, what a

fearful winter had, in a few moments, dropped down upon the glorious summer of her sister's heart, freezing and withering its rich bloom; and she dreaded the first words which should be coined from her soul's fierce agony; but no sound broke the fearful silence. Alice felt that she would rather be alone, and quietly left the room; and then, the anguish which was convulsing her soul, voiced itself in low, deep moans; then, when the first wild tempest had passed, the cold bitter night of desolation settled around her spirit; but it was a starless night. Seating herself at her table, she wrote:

"CLATTON, MAY, 1861.

"MR. TALCOTT:—The enemies of my country are my enemies. ELLIE CLOUD."

She took from her finger the ring he had given her, and enclosed it in the letter; and as she did this, in spite of the spirit that nerved her, tears, which acknowledge no control, would fall from her eyes. It was not the reality over which she wept; but the dream which had been dissolved; the shadowy "might have been."

"Ellie," called her mother; "can you come down and read the daily to me? while I finish Charlie's zouave."

"In a minute, mother;" she held each word with a strong curb of will, lest a quiver in her voice should betray her. She entered the room where her mother was sitting, and taking up the paper, began to read some unimportant item.

"Ellie, why don't you read the dispatches?" asked Mrs. Cloud, a little impatience in her voice; but when she raised her eyes to the face of her daughter, she read in it the writing of a great desolation. She had seen Charlie taking up the letter, and at once suspected the cause.

"What is it, my child? you are not afraid to confide in your mother, are you?"

The sympathetic voice penetrated the thick cloud which hung over her heart; and through the rent gushed the tear-rain.

"Oh, mother, it is all over; I have sent back Walter Talcott his ring, and with it all my hopes of happiness;" and she took the letter from her pocket and handed it to her mother, who regarded her with blended emotions, pity for her deep suffering, and admiration of the heroism which had led her so promptly to sacrifice every personal feeling for a great principle.

Two months of gloomy days were woven into the web of Ellie Cloud's life, days when she

olt that death upon the battle field would be happiness when compared with the mildew which was gathering upon her youth.

"Mother, I have enlisted."—It was Harry Cloud who electrified his family by this announcement, as he joined them in the parlor, where Alice was practicing a patriotic piece of music.

The mother arose from her seat, and laid her hand upon her son's head; that fair, boyish head, wearing only the ripeness of twenty summers, saying, as she did so,

"You have been a comfort to me, Harry, ever since I rocked you in your cradle; and were I asked to make a sacrifice for my country, I could make none greater than to give my oldest son, who has never wrung his mother's heart, but always been a blessing and a pride; and I am proud of you to-day, my son, that you have too much spirit to remain inactive at home, while others do the work of saving the government."

Those were pale faces that bent over the work of getting Harry ready that afternoon; and as he appeared in the door just before tea, with that face delicate as a girl's, and the mother and sisters thought how soon that beautiful head might lie upon the battle field, the golden hair tangled with blood, it was too much; and Alice dropped her work with the low exclamation, "Oh, Harry!"

He went and stood by her side, laying his hand upon her bowed head.

"Alice, you would not discourage me?"

She arose and put her hands upon his shoulders.

"Don't think that, Harry! I should blush for you if you did not go; I am proud of you, my brother, but none the less pained."

The day for Harry's departure came, and Ellie stood pale and tearless as those brave men marched by her, as they would march up to the cannon's fierce mouth, following the stars upon their country's banner, which should light them into the darkness of battle. There is a deeper grief than that expressed by tears; a sorrow so freezing that it congeals the drops ere they reach the eye.

Her brother clasped her hand as he passed. "May Heaven guard you, my brother! You may die for our country; I am dying for it now." He understood her, although no word had ever passed between them relative to her lover's disloyalty.

"Yes, Ellie, many die for their country

who never see the battle field," replied Harry, as he pressed her hand.

Oh, if Walter Talcott had been one of those brave men, she mused—if he had fallen beneath the folds of the old banner—if she could have remembered him as she once knew him, against the cloud of her sorrow would have arched the beautiful bow of memory and hope; for the tears which fall over a buried love are not half so agonizing or bitter as those which drop upon a fallen, *living* idol.

Two months had passed since Harry joined the army, and still the cold, pitiless hand of sorrow was pressing the blood from Ellie's cheek and lip. She had hoped against hope, that there might be some mistake—that one of her roguish cousins might have forged that letter which had hurled such a dart into her quivering heart; and then judgment wrested from her all such straws to which her spirit in its drowning agony clung. She knew every peculiarity of the hand-writing; it was his—his only; the fact was piercing her through with its stony eyes, and she must not shrink from its gaze.

Another dreadful battle had been fought, and anxious friends were waiting in painful suspense the "official reports" of the killed and wounded; but before they were received, a letter came from Harry, saying—

"I am wounded, Ellie, but not seriously; but enough to unfit me for duty. And now, Ellie, if you want to see and feel what the brave men of the nation are doing and suffering for the old flag, come with father when he comes to take me home. The trip will benefit you; and, by the way, sis, I want you to see one of our colonels. He is a splendid officer, and what would be a great recommendation among you ladies, the handsomest man in his regiment; and, what seems to me unaccountable, has taken a great fancy to your brother Harry."

"Will you go Ellie?" asked her father. "I shall start day after to-morrow."

Ellie hesitated; like most persons, when under the chill of sorrow, she refused to come out into the sunlight of more cheerful spirits, and shrank from contact with the world; and what a few months ago would have been a pleasure, seemed now a task.

"Yes, Ellie, go," urged her mother; "you can make Harry so much more comfortable during the trip than father can; it is one of the gifts of a woman's hand, you know." And the thought of being useful to her brother, decided her.

Mrs. Cloud secretly hoped that the trip, as well as the suffering which her daughter would witness, would turn aside her thoughts partially from her own unhappiness.

The warm-hearted mothers, sisters and wives of the absent soldiers, embraced the opportunity of sending tokens of remembrance and affection to their absent friends, of a more substantial character than messages simply; but crowded a box with cakes jellies, jams—everything which could tempt the appetite of an invalid, to be taken by Mr. Cloud and his daughter to the hospital.

"You will find Lieutenant Cloud in there," and the nurse opened the door, and stepped aside, for the father and daughter to enter.

Harry had not expected them so soon, and when his father's sedate, kind face appeared, followed by that of his beautiful sister, he experienced that delicious thrill of joy which no one better understands than the soldier, who is cut off from all the enjoyments which constitute home. Impulsively, he made an effort to spring to meet them; but the wounded limb refused to assist in any such gymnastic. In another moment, his father was beside him, his brown hand clasping his son's, and Ellie's tears were dropping on his face.

"Don't cry, sis"—the tears in his own eyes—"I am doing splendidly, the surgeon says. A few experiences of this kind season a soldier." And he smiled up in his sister's face.

"Father," said Ellie, an hour later, "if you will have that box brought in, I will give Harry something better than rice for his dinner."

The box was brought, and Ellie explored its depths, bringing up raspberry jam, dried beef, cinnamon rolls, etc. In a word, everything which mother could think of to send.

"Three cheers for the ladies of Clayton!" enthusiastically exclaimed Harry. "If that won't cure a wounded limb, it will a wounded appetite. And now, Ellie, if you want to immortalize yourself, and render your memory sacred, just visit the poor fellows in the hospital with the contents of that box; and if there should be any Catholics here, there will be another saint added to their calendar."

"Just what I intend doing, Harry, when I have seen you enjoy your dinner;" and Ellie seated herself, with her face turned from the door, towards her brother. Mr. Cloud had gone out to make arrangements for Harry's removal, and the brother and sister were alone, the former asking a hundred questions

about home, and drinking in the answers with a zest which those who are hourly surrounded by its numberless ties can scarcely understand.

All at once he paused, and seemed for the first time to observe that his sister's face had lost its oval outline, and that the color had almost faded from her cheek. He grew suddenly grave. He wanted to ask her if she had heard anything farther from her rebel lover; but with that sensitive caution which is an attribute of some natures, he was searching mentally for words which should not probe the wound of her heart. And in this little pause, the door swung so quietly upon its hinges that neither observed it until aroused by the voice of a third person.

"Lieutenant, I have called to see how your wound is doing."

And that voice! It made every fibre of Ellie Cloud's frame vibrate, as the full, deep tones came thrilling upon her ear. The young lieutenant bowed respectfully, and Ellie, disbelieving the evidence of her senses, turned towards the door.

"My sister—Colonel Talcott."

For a moment Ellie stood petrified—speechless; but in that moment thought, with its lightning swiftness, was trying to solve the enigma. She would have known that voice anywhere. Those were the same deep brown eyes, fathomless in tenderness. It was he whose supposed disloyalty had made her life for the last few months so desolate, standing before her, wearing the uniform of a United States officer. He advanced to meet her, with extended hand.

"What does it mean?" she faltered. She tried to look into his face, but the color was rushing to her cheeks, and her voice trembled.

"It means, Nellie, that I deserve the fate of a traitor for making this dear little face so thin and pale." And he looked yearningly down upon the trembling girl before him, as though he would like to kiss the paleness from the sweet lips, were it not for the just then inconvenient presence of the young lieutenant.

"In the name of all the Cæsars, what's this?" shouted Harry, forgetting the deference which he had always observed towards a superior officer, as the truth flashed upon his mind that Talcott was the name of his sister's lover. And then one of those grand smiles, which made him so beautiful, lit up Walter Talcott's face, and its light beamed in upon

Ellie's soul—a glorious sunrise upon her spirit's darkened landscape.

"It means, Lieutenant Cloud, that your sister and myself are acquaintances. And now, as we have no other parlor, if you will be so obliging, sir, as to allow us to imagine this room one, and in consideration of the peculiar nature of the case will permit a misunderstanding to be cleared up in your presence, I shall be greatly your debtor."

"Most cheerfully, Colonel," laughed Harry, "since it affords me the opportunity of witnessing the making-up of a lovers' quarrel, and which I stipulate, for the favor conferred, shall end as all such quarrels usually do."

And then succeeded the explanation. After volunteering in the Union service, Colonel Talcott recalled the expression made by Ellie, when the storm was beginning to mutter in the distance—the remark quoted in his letter—and the fancy seized him to give her an opportunity of exercising her talent in behalf of the Union, in the form of a scathing letter. But when he received her reply, he saw that decisive, earnest action, as well as earnest words, were a part of her nature, and he hastened to undeceive her. But, by a series of accidents, none of his letters reached their destination.

"*Can* you forgive me, Ellie?" he asked; and his face was drooping nearer that of the girl who had been hungering for the sound of that voice through those dark, dark months.

She laid one hand in his, and toyed with his scarf with the other; for Harry had, to all appearance, become absorbed in the paper which he was holding up before his face. And Walter Talcott knew he might claim the little hand which had once before been plighted to him, and he again slipped the diamond ring upon her finger.

That afternoon, a travelling party, composed of Mr. Cloud, Harry, Ellie, and Colonel Talcott, took the train for the East. Great was the surprise of the Cloud family, when the carriage which they had sent to the depot arrived, to find that it contained a fourth person; and Alice, timid little fawn, was nearly overwhelmed to see that the gentleman wore the scarf and dress of a Colonel. And there might have been a flush of pride blended with the happiness upon Ellie's face, as she walked up the avenue leading to her father's door, by the side of the dark, handsome officer.

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The next evening, there was a wedding at

Mr. Cloud's, and Ellie became the bride of Colonel Talcott. And as the young man related to the guests the history of the test to which he had subjected Ellie's patriotism, the old pastor who united them declared that a young lady so true to the cause of her country, deserved to marry a colonel.